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Boston Harbor

Challenges and Opportunities for the 1980's

Kevin H. White, Mayor
City of Boston

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...every inhabitant who is a
householder shall have free fishing
and fowling in any great ponds,
bays, coves and rivers, so far as the
sea ebbs and flows...

Ordinance of 1641 of the General Court of Massachusetts
Bay Colony based upon Charters granted by King
Charles I to the Royal Governor.



Boston Harbor

Challenges and Opportunities for the 1980's

City of Boston
Kevin H. White, *Mayor*

Boston Redevelopment Authority
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"For some time, I have looked forward to the day when Boston would once more be a city opening out to sea rather than turned inward on itself. Historically, Boston was a great seafaring port. Both economically and visually, the life of the city was oriented toward its beautiful, natural harbor—one of the finest on the eastern seaboard. Though much has happened in recent years to reestablish the link between the harbor and the city, much more is necessary to restore it for the enjoyment and benefit of Boston and its neighboring communities."

Kevin W. White





*Boston Harbor, 1854
(Courtesy of The
Bostonian Society)*

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Introduction

*Sheltered Walkway—
Long Wharf, circa 1880
(Courtesy of The Society
for the Preservation of
New England
Antiquities)*



- 4 Since its founding in 1630, Boston's fortune and its future have been linked with its harbor. The presence of a large and protected port was the primary reason for the settling of Boston, and led to the City's golden era as a major banking and financial center. Boston's decline as a port city started in the mid 1800's when changes in shipping needs, increased costs, and urban growth patterns rendered many of Boston's piers vacant and useless.

Although the functions of Boston's harbor have changed considerably over the past 350 years, the harbor, its 30 islands and central Boston serve as focal point for New England. Over three million people live within a 25 mile radius of the harbor. In the City of Boston, over 200,000 people live within walking distance of the water along the harbor, and the Mystic, Chelsea, Charles and Neponset Rivers.

The decline of the harbor started to reverse about 20 years ago when the City, through the Boston Redevelopment Authority, began an effort to revitalize the waterfront. More than \$100 million has been spent by the City to upgrade the commercial and recreational resources of the harbor.

In the downtown waterfront alone, a new residential community consisting of some 1600 units has been created. The commercial activity which is now part of the waterfront ranges from small shops to Faneuil Hall Marketplace, and millions of people have visited the

waterfront to enjoy regional attractions, such as the New England Aquarium and the Waterfront Park. Across the harbor, at the decommissioned Charlestown Navy Yard, work has begun on creating another new residential community, one that also has at its focal point a large waterfront park and a public walkway along the stretch of the waterfront that was once closed from public use.

The success of those efforts has brought more than just dramatic physical improvements to the waterfront. It has helped re-establish Boston's historic link with the sea.

But even with these significant accomplishments, there are still major problems concerning the waterfront to be solved. As the City and the BRA have pursued many harbor planning and development efforts, new issues have arisen which must be addressed now.

Perhaps the most important outgrowth of the City's past effort is the harbor's potential as a source of economic growth and recreation. Interest in the harbor has never been greater. Now, with more than 100 governmental agencies, associations and community groups in some way involved with the harbor, this new interest brings to the forefront conflicting priorities for the use of the harbor. Never has there been a greater need for coordination of development and planning for the harbor.

Therefore, the BRA, six months ago established a Harbor Planning Task Force within the agency, and retained



*T Wharf, circa 1890
(Courtesy of the Society
for the Preservation of
New England
Antiquities)*



*Landing of British
Troops—Long Wharf,
1768 (Courtesy of The
Bostonian Society)*

Sasaki Associates as consultants, to undertake a comprehensive planning study of Boston's waterfront.

This Boston Harbor study is not a final report. Rather, it allows the BRA, as the city's planning agency, to articulate the challenges and opportunities concerning the revitalization of Boston Harbor and its 100 miles of shoreline. Issues surrounding the harbor are many and complex, ranging from development of a comprehensive plan and management program, to concerns for more adequate public access to and use of the harbor. Demand for development must be balanced against the need and desire to preserve waterfront areas for recreation of all kinds, including parks and open space.

The program outlined in this report is ambitious—and expensive. The City cannot by itself resolve all the issues any more than it can underwrite the expenses involved in the program. Ultimately, Boston Harbor is a regional resource, and as such, the future of the harbor and funding of public improvements must be shared by all levels of government, as well as the private sector.

But the City, through this study, can articulate a vision of what the Boston Harbor can become and a strategy for achieving that vision. It remains for many others to coordinate their actions with the City for more productive uses beneficial to the neighborhoods and City of Boston. For instance, the Massachusetts Port Authority, the largest owner of land along the harborfront, must

relinquish control of some vacant and underutilized parcels of land. Similarly, the Metropolitan District Commission must proceed expeditiously in finalizing implementing the proposed sewage treatment program for the harbor. This report focuses upon only a few of the major issues confronting the harbor.

First, it is directed towards gaining a more complete view of the present use of Boston's harborfront, as well as the problems and opportunities which exist in many of Boston's harborfront neighborhoods, such as East Boston, Charlestown, the North End and downtown, South Boston and Dorchester. This phase of the report is an inventory, a status report, of the uses along Boston's harborfront at the present time.

Second, the report includes a detailed planning and development program for a portion of the Boston harborfront from the Waterfront Park to the Fort Point Channel area.

Finally, the report reviews significant management and funding strategies, legislation, and programs which could have a major effect upon achieving improvements to the harbor and its shoreline.

The report should be viewed in its historic context. Twenty years ago a private, non-profit group proposed a plan for revitalization of the downtown Boston waterfront. The City of Boston responded to that challenge by



- 6 refining that plan and implementing its recommendations through an urban renewal project carried out by the City.

Like the earlier renewal plan, this study outlines a plan for action that will involve the public and private sectors and will determine the future of Boston's harborfront for the rest of this century.

Twenty years ago the challenge to private sector and to the City was to show that Boston's harbor could be brought back to life. The City had to take the lead in encouraging development and in providing development incentives and subsidies to encourage new commercial activity. The efforts brought Boston to a crossroads in the development of its waterfront land. Today, it must assume the role of coordinator, again taking the lead in helping to determine what can be done, what should be done and how it will be done.

Aside from obvious improvements which are taking place along the waterfront in the downtown as well as in Boston's harborside neighborhoods, and new efforts which are just beginning at the Charlestown Navy Yard and Columbia Point, numerous problems remain.

Harbor Transportation

Access to the Harbor Islands is limited and expanded water commuter service needs to be developed.

Harbor Development/Conservation Policies

Major policies must be formulated for Boston Harbor and its shoreline. Conflicts between uses need to be resolved.

Harbor Pollution

The MDC and EPA are reviewing alternative plans for reducing sewage flows into Boston Harbor and its tributaries, but to date little has been achieved in reducing levels of pollution in Boston Harbor.

Public Access

Significant areas of the waterfront have been made accessible to the public in recent years through either public acquisition and improvement or through the placement of strict controls over private development projects requiring public access to the water. Nevertheless, vast stretches of waterfront property are off limits to the public.

Harbor Management

It is estimated that there are over 100 public entities with varying types of jurisdictions over Boston Harbor. An overall management program capable of coordinating these diverse interests together with a comprehensive plan, program and strategy for Boston Harbor and its shoreline is needed.



CZM

Deteriorated Piers (CZM)



Future of Massport's Harborfront Holdings

The largest single owner of harborfront property is Massport. Much of this land lies vacant or is underused. Massport has indicated interest in divesting itself of some of these properties. The future reuse of some of these properties for community use and for job-producing economic reuses is a serious issue.

Harbor-related activities provide employment for approximately 8,200 residents. More intense use of the harbor for maritime and commercial purposes consistent with other desired uses would double that figure. As a locus for shipping and commerce, recreation and conservation, new community development and other economic activity, the harbor offers exciting potentials for growth and economic return to the City and its harborfront neighborhoods.

Summary and Recommendations



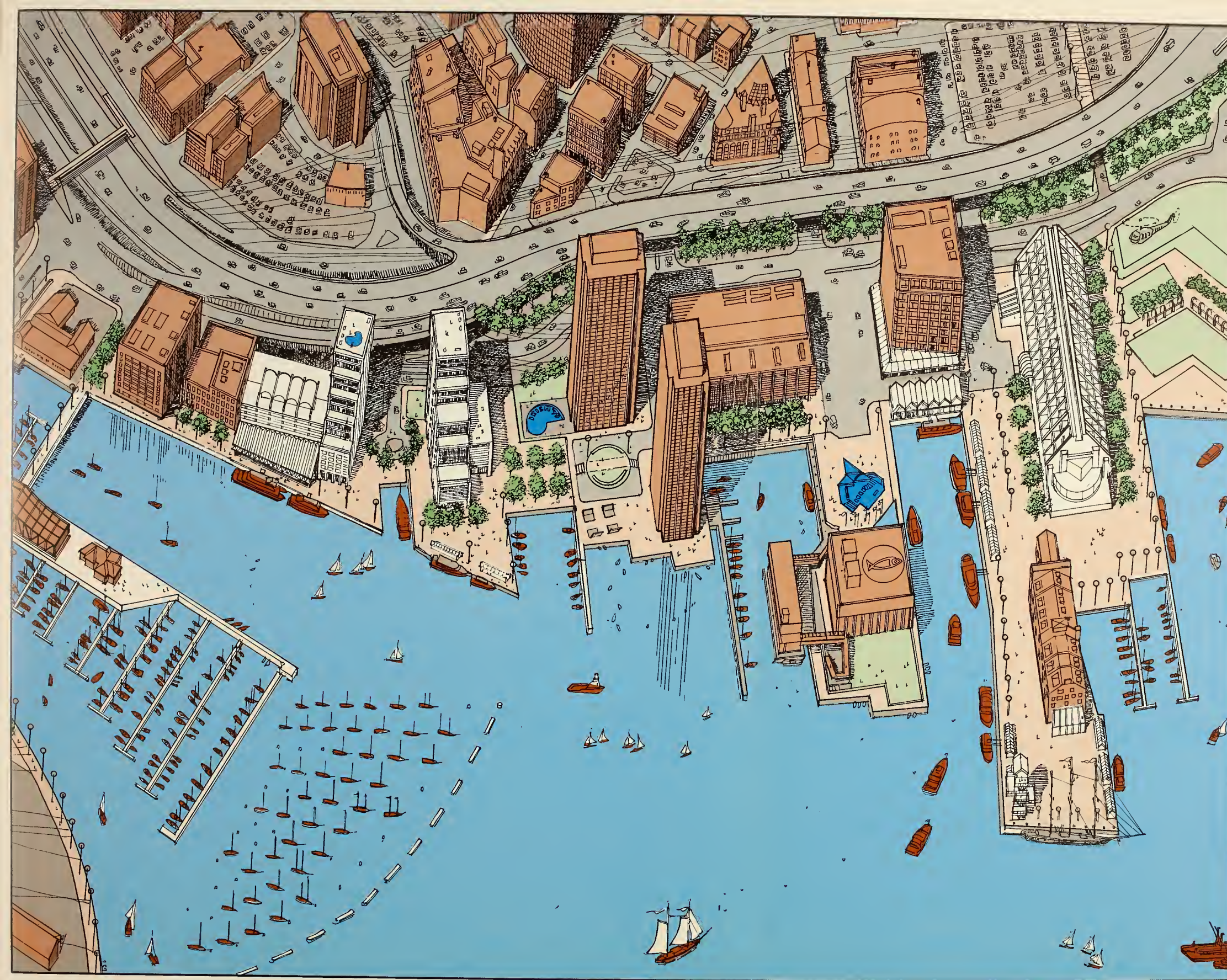
Changing Function of Harborfront

- 8 Shipping and shipbuilding no longer occupy major portions of the harborside land, but it has only been during the past decade that portions of the harborfront have again begun to be lively, active, and accessible to the public. Major City-sponsored development programs are underway in South Boston, with the Boston Marine Industrial Park; in Charlestown, with the redevelopment of the former Charlestown Naval Shipyard; in Dorchester, with plans and programs to create a new mixed-income community at Columbia Point.

Despite the successful revitalization of the downtown waterfront area and several new waterfront parks in the North End, Charlestown, and East Boston, much of the harborfront land lies vacant and unproductive.

Current Use of Harborfront

Bordering Boston Harbor are over 2,000 acres of land of which nearly 700 acres are vacant. About 550 acres are used for industrial purposes, 440 acres for public recreational purposes and 316 for commercial uses. Over three million people in the Greater Boston area live within 25 miles of the harbor, and in Boston alone, over 200,000 people live within walking distance of the harbor and the rivers entering the harbor.



Downtown/Fort Point Channel



Outstanding Issues and Problems

- 10 Increasing concern and attention are just beginning to be given to some of the harbor's outstanding issues and problems:
- Access to the harbor's islands, expanded water commuter service, and use of the Inner Harbor for intra-City trips.
- Formulation of major policies for development and conservation of the harbor and its shoreline.
- Conflicts between land needs of water dependent uses, and uses such as housing, and community open space which benefit from waterfront sites, but do not require them.
- Inadequate public access to the harborfront.
- Coordination and management of diverse public entities having overlapping jurisdictions in the harbor.
- Future of underutilized properties held by the Massachusetts Port Authority.
- Harbor pollution.
- Inadequate public controls over private development which exclude public use of or access to the waterfront.
- Vacant waterfront areas, and poor condition of many piers, bulkheads, and seawalls.

Harbor Neighborhoods

It is this underutilized land which provides numerous opportunities for those Boston neighborhoods near the harbor.

East Boston

With over half of East Boston's 480 acres of waterfront lying vacant, several opportunities should be pursued:

- Acquire and improve underutilized Massport properties on Piers 1, 3, and 4 for reuse as public open space, waterfront walkways, boat basins, community housing, and marine commercial purposes.
- From Piers 1, 3, and 4, continue a public waterfront edge to the new North Ferry Park, and north to Shore Plaza East.
- Develop the old East Boston Ferry Slip for ferry mooring and landings connecting with downtown and other harbor neighborhoods.
- Acquire and develop waterfront parcels between North Ferry Park and Heritage Apartments for community housing, open space, and commercial purposes.
- Develop the historic Donald McKay Shipyards and Bromfield Shipyards including public access to and along the harbor edge.

- Examine industrial development potential of vacant land areas along the Chelsea River.

Charlestown

- Continue long range development program for Charlestown Naval Shipyard for housing, commercial, waterfront open space, public walkways and industrial uses.
- Continue public edge from the shipyard and USS Constitution Historic Site to Paul Revere Park at Charlestown Bridge.
- Adjacent to City Square, develop reuse program for all waterfront parcels from Charlestown Bridge to USS Constitution Historic Site, including acquisition and reuse of underutilized Massport owned Hoosiac Pier.
- Develop ferry landing from Charlestown Waterfront as part of Inner Harbor ferry system connecting historic site with downtown and other harbor neighborhoods.

North End/North Station Area

- As part of the North Station planning and development program, continue public park and walkway edge from the Charles River Embankment and Science Museum area through North Station connecting with the New North End Waterfront Park.
- Complete improvement of North End Waterfront Park.
- Continue to secure appropriate private development of Sargent's Wharf together with public access to and along the harborfront.

South Boston

- Continue with City and EDIC sponsored programs for Boston Marine Industrial Park for industrial, ship repair and future Third Containerport activities.
- Encourage EDIC's preliminary plans to develop public walkways through BMIP to the Dry Docks, industrial, and ship repair area.
- Continue to work with Massport on programs to rehabilitate Commonwealth and Fish Piers.
- Examine feasibility of Inner Harbor ferry landings in South Boston at Fort Independence connecting with downtown and historic points of interest along harborfront.

Dorchester

- Continue development program for Columbia Point for new, mixed income housing, waterfront improvements, boat basin, and related commercial uses.
- Develop ferry landing at new Kennedy Library as part of Inner Harbor ferry system.
- Continue public waterfront edge from Carson Beach to Kennedy Library to Malibu Beach.
- Examine potential for reuse of inappropriate industrial parcels at Port Norfolk for community housing and public open space purposes.



Location Map

Downtown/Fort Point Channel

- 12 The Downtown Waterfront/Fort Point Channel area was chosen for detailed study as a prototype for policies outlined in this harbor study. Recent revitalization programs carried out in the Downtown Waterfront/Faneuil Market place area, accompanied by increased activity and traffic congestion have all drawn considerable attention to remaining unsolved issues. These issues include concerns for more adequate docking and terminal facilities for Harbor Islands, excursion and commuter boats; development proposals for the downtown waterfront and Fort Point Channel area which require public policy decisions; the continuing need for securing public access along the harborfront and areas for public landings and mooring of private pleasure boats. For purposes of investigating these and other issues along the downtown and Fort Point Channel waterfronts, the Boston Redevelopment Authority retained the firm of Sasaki Associates. Detailed recommendations have emerged from this effort and are summarized here.

Harbor Transportation

Development of two public terminal facilities is recommended: one between Long and Central Wharves adjacent to the Aquarium MBTA station; and one on Fosters Wharf as part of a multi-use complex of public terminal facilities, parking, bus loading and unloading, and restaurant.

Public Access

A system of public waterfront walkways is proposed along the water's edge from the downtown Waterfront Park to Northern Avenue and along either side of Fort Point Channel. These walkways would be developed by a combination of public entities, private interests, the latter through development controls placed upon new development parcels, or by acquisition of public easements through some existing privately owned parcels.

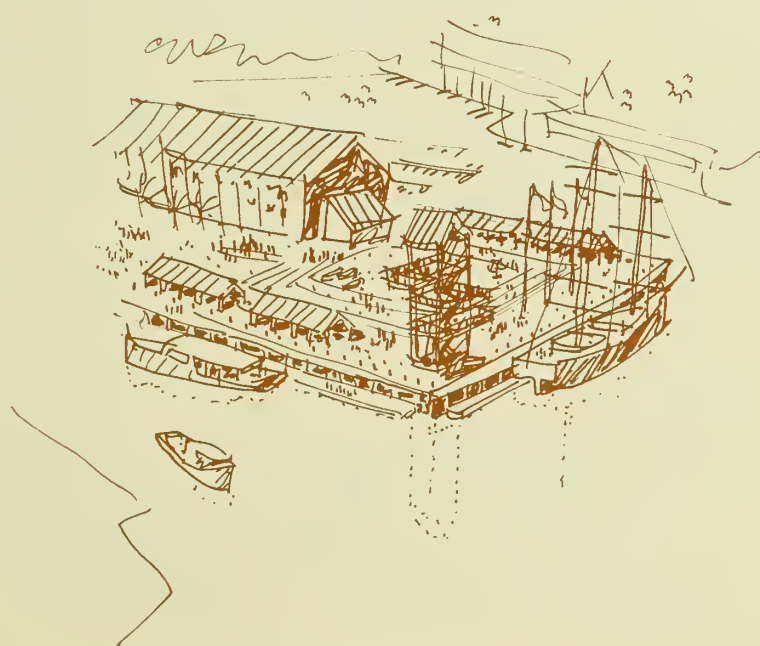
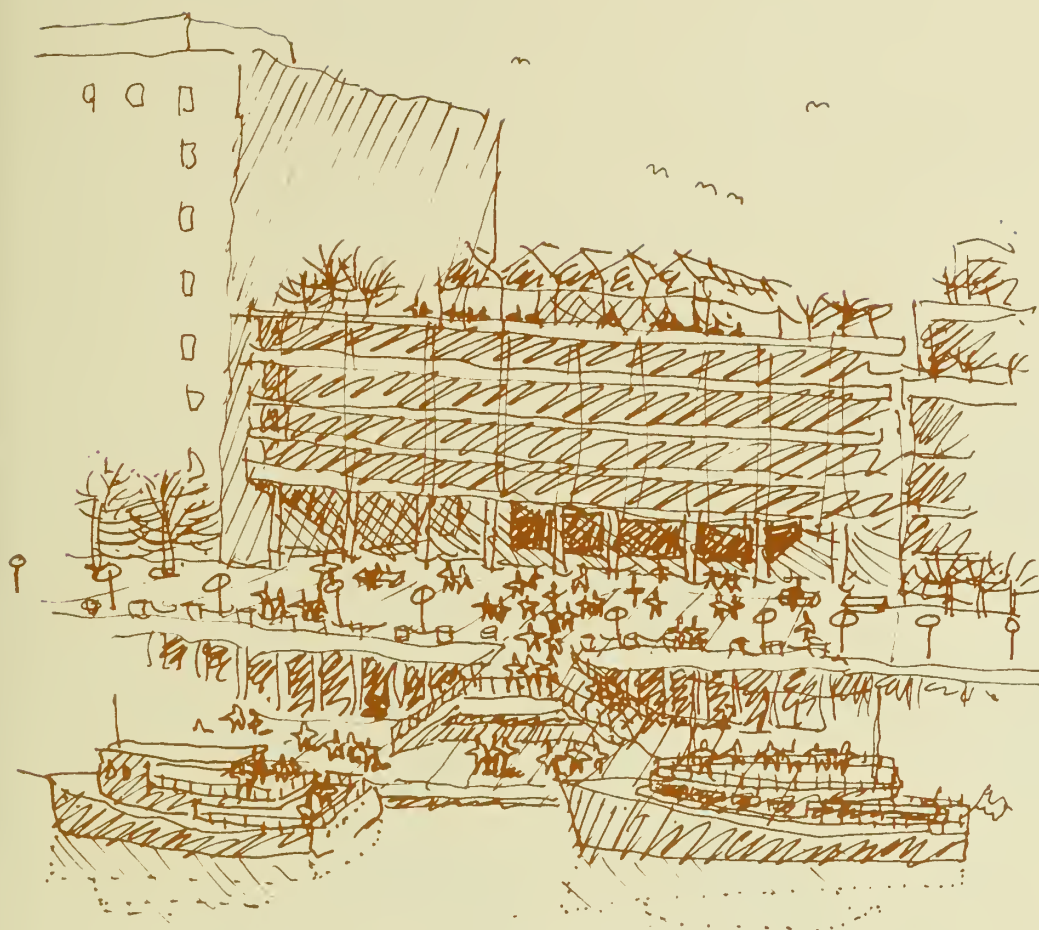
Public Open Space

Numerous additions to the downtown waterfront public open space system are proposed including the rehabilitation of the public open areas of Long Wharf, and small waterfront park areas at Rows Wharf, Russia Wharf, Pier 1 and various locations along the Fort Point Channel.

Public Landings

Locations for public landings for small craft are recommended adjacent to Long Wharf, at Northern Avenue, and along Fort Point Channel. The tip of Long Wharf is recommended as the major public landing, but largely for historic boats and ships.

Public Terminal Facility
Fosters Wharf



Public Landing
Long Wharf

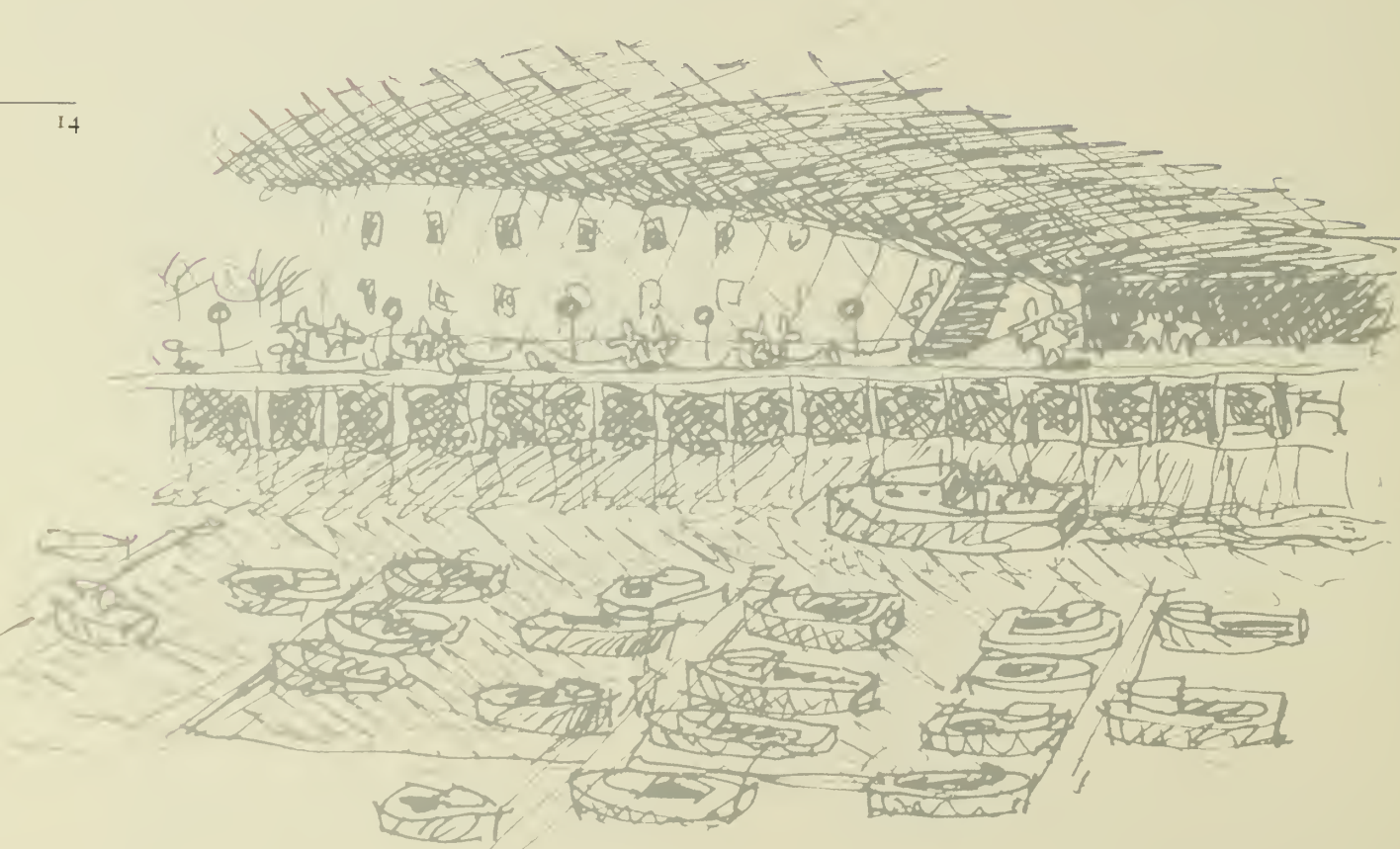
Boat Basins

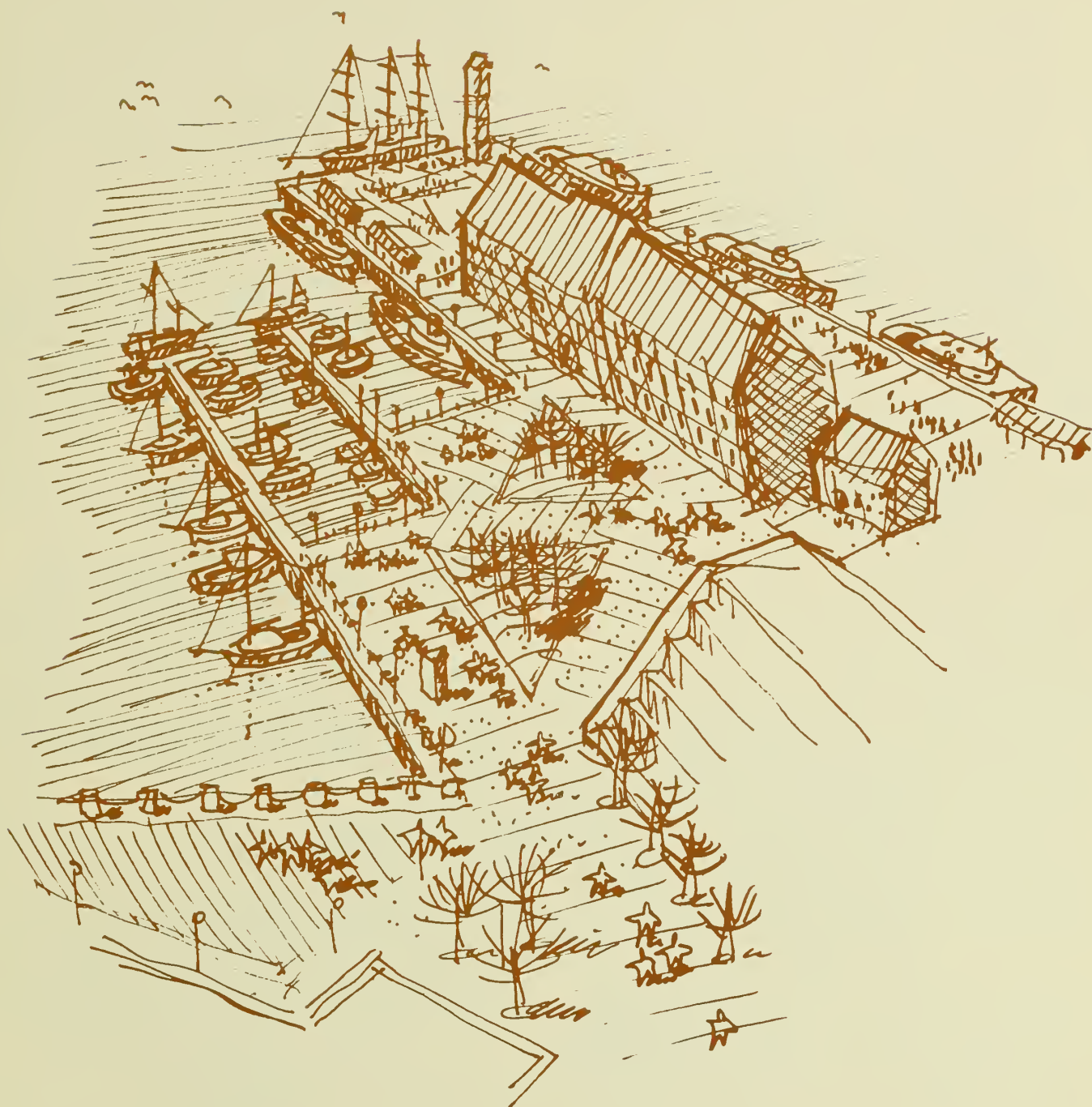
Major locations for new boat basins are recommended at the Northern Avenue Bridge and in Fort Point Channel.

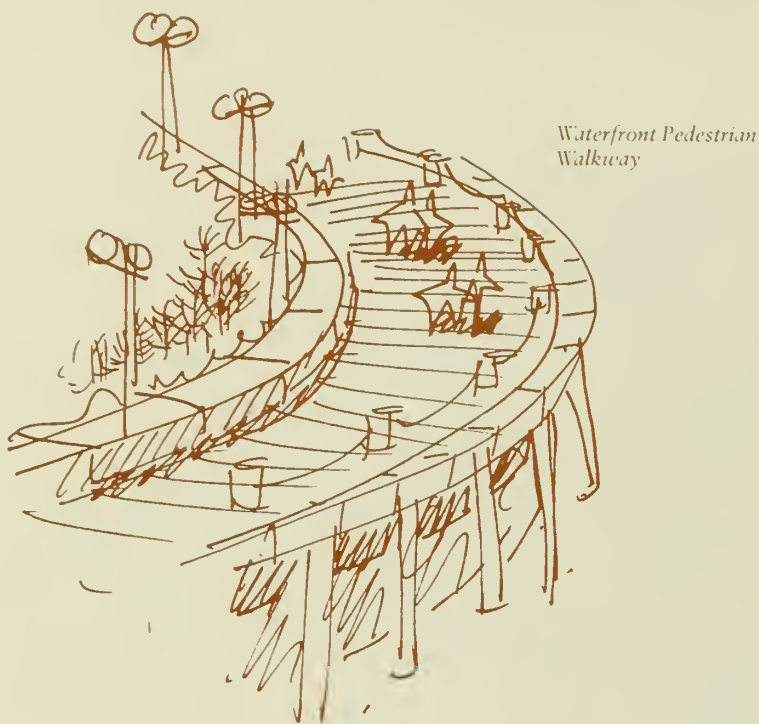
Boston Harbor Historic Site

The most attractive way of acquiring, developing and assuring the long term maintenance of the historic areas and open space in the downtown waterfront-Fort Point Channel area is to have them designated as a part of the existing multi-site Boston National Historic Park. Therefore, it is recommended that necessary studies and negotiations be undertaken immediately to define an appropriate area for designation as the seventh National Historic Site in Boston.

*Northern Avenue Bridge
Boat Basin Under*







Funding Strategy

- 16 Given the scope and magnitude of the proposals for the Downtown Waterfront/Fort Point Channel area, it is obvious that their implementation will require a coordinated funding strategy. Many of the proposals are regional in scope, benefiting and serving people beyond the City of Boston. Responsibilities for funding therefore must lie jointly between the federal and state governments and well as with the City. In addition, some proposals, particularly those related to new private development opportunities will be the responsibility of private entities.

At the broadest levels, funding the proposals could come from two federal sources— 1) the Kennedy-Moakley Harbor Legislation for Boston Harbor which has been submitted to Congress for passage and for \$20 million appropriation; and 2) an amendment to the legislation for the six-site Boston Historic Park and appropriation of funds to include the Boston Harbor Historic Site as an additional site for management and improvement by the National Park Service.

In conjunction with or as alternatives to the two broad levels of funding sources described above, numerous other funding strategies could be pursued for various recommendations in this study.

Long Wharf

Phase One of the improvements totalling \$1.7 million to Long Wharf will begin in 1980 funded by grants from the federal Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (HCRS) and Boston's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Remaining improvements to Long Wharf should be funded by a Phase Two HCRS grant, and by state and federal transportation funds for harbor transportation related improvements.

Harbor Terminals

The recommendations for the two terminal facilities; one between Long and Central Wharves, another major terminal on Fosters Wharf should be implemented by the State Executive Office of Transportation and Construction with Urban Systems funds and additional state bonding authority for improvement of harbor transportation facilities.

Harbor Ferry and Commuter Boat Docking and Mooring Facilities

Docking and mooring boats, ramps and water edge treatment including new bulkheads, outdoor public waiting areas, shelters and landscaping improvements for harbor ferry and commuter boats should be implemented and funded by the State Executive Office of Transportation and Construction with Urban Systems funds and Commonwealth bonds. Such improvements are proposed along Long Wharf, along Atlantic Avenue between Long and Central Wharves, Fosters Wharf, and the public water edge along Rows and Fosters Wharves.

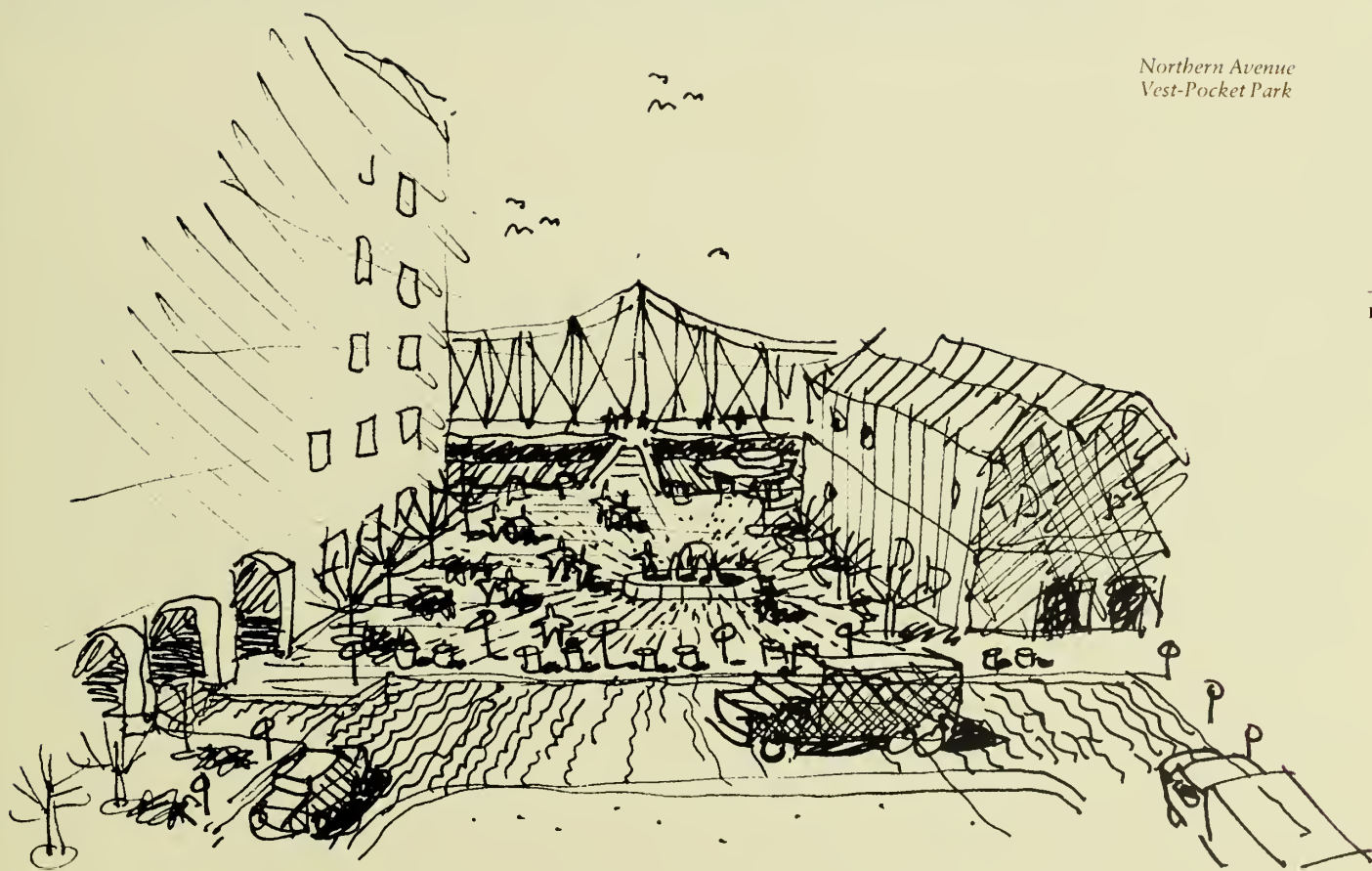
Waterfront Pedestrian Walkways

Connecting public access links along the harborfront should be funded from federal Heritage Conservation and Recreation monies. Examples would include public access through India Wharf to Rows Wharf, from Fosters Wharf to the Northern Avenue Bridge, and other connecting links along Fort Point Channel.

Private Improvement for Public Use.

Similar to the park constructed by the Children's and Transportation Museums for public use along Fort Point Channel, similar privately funded improvements accessible by the public are already part of the rehabilitation program for Russia Wharf, Rows Wharf, and should be incorporated as part of other new private development proposals within the area.

Northern Avenue
Vest-Pocket Park



Harbor Neighborhoods

*Downtown Boston
from East Boston (BRA)*



Introduction

- 18 Boston's harbor neighborhoods extend from Chelsea to Quincy and include East Boston, Charlestown, Downtown/Fort Point Channel, South Boston and Dorchester. The waterfronts of many of these neighborhoods were formerly Boston's "front doors" serving as the focus of Boston's maritime commerce and the center of employment for people living in these neighborhoods. While at one time, shipping activity of one kind or another took up virtually every inch of harborside land, today many docks lie empty and decaying. At the same time, conflicting interests compete for waterfront land—either to develop it or to protect it for public use or some possible future need.

Public access has become more critical and more in demand as waterfront areas have been redeveloped. In many neighborhoods, local residents have long been cut off from the water by military installations, expressways, port facilities and private development.

Pollution of the harbor is as critical as ever, a deterrent to expanded boating use, and sometimes the cause of the closing of existing beaches. Use of the Inner Harbor as part of Boston's transportation system remains for the most part unexplored and access to the harbor's islands by public ferries is severely limited. The docking facilities for such purposes are in urgent need of improvement.

Only recently have portions of the harborfront become examples of the many opportunities that exist. The

popularity and success of the downtown waterfront from Quincy Market, to Waterfront Park, to the restored historic structures have made Boston an envied prototype of public and private improvement programs for waterfronts throughout the nation. New parks and walkways are making waterfronts in East Boston, Charlestown, South Boston and the North End more attractive, and accessible to the public. The waterfront is also becoming more economically productive with the development of job producing industrial parks in South Boston and the possibility of developing some industrial jobs on a section of the Charlestown Naval Shipyard.



Harborfront Opportunities

- Proposed
- Existing
- Boat Lines
- Inner Harbor Ferry System
- Terminal Facilities
- Ferry Dock Landings
- Marinas, Yacht Clubs, Boat Basins
- Ship Repair-Building
- Commercial Shipping Activities
- Historic Features
- Views
- Public Open Space
- Potential Public Open Space
- MBTA Service
- Harborfront Development Opportunities

Commonwealth Pier
(Courtesy of C. Dick
Norton Studio)



(CZM)



Land Use

- 20 Land parcels bordering Boston Harbor total about 2,112 acres, not including Logan International Airport. Approximately one-third is vacant (694 acres), and one-quarter used for industrial purposes (553 acres). Another 316 acres are used for commercial purposes, 438 acres for recreational uses, and the remaining 112 acres for residential purposes.

Of the 694 acres classified as 'vacant,' nearly three quarters are either totally vacant land with no structures and unused, or vacant with unused structures. The remaining quarter is vacant, but used for outdoor storage or for open parking.

A surprisingly large percentage of the total harborfront land is used for water-dependent purposes—nearly one-half of the total 2,112 acres. Water-dependent maritime uses comprise about one-quarter of the harborfront area, water-dependent commercial uses about 7 percent, and water-dependent public uses, about 19 percent.

As would be anticipated, the largest single land owner is the Massachusetts Port Authority (2,484 acres), including Logan International Airport. Massport-owned properties include, in addition to the airport, the Castle Island Containerport Terminal (101 acres), Moran Containerport Terminal along the Mystic (57 acres), Hoosiac Pier (8 acres), piers in East Boston (35 acres), Commonwealth Pier (11 acres), Fish Pier (8 acres), and about 14 acres of land leased from the United States Government at the South Boston Army Base.

This land inventory begins to lend an understanding of the various uses of the harborfront. These facts suggest that 1) considerable improvement opportunities are available along Boston's harbor, given the large amount of vacant and underused land; and 2) relatively little of the harbor is readily accessible to the public (about 18 percent).



*East Boston Ferry,
circa 1900 (Collection
of Robert Stanley)*

East Boston

The East Boston waterfront has been important in Boston's commercial history since the early 1800's. In the 19th century, East Boston was an important business area whose shipyards were world-famous. The Donald McKay shipyard was the site of the building of 21 clipper ships in addition to schooners, ocean packets, warships and steam vessels. Shipyard activities declined in the late 1800's and East Boston became a predominantly residential area, spurred by the immigrant influx in the early 1900's.

About 480 acres of property lie along East Boston's waterfront, not including Logan Airport. Of this over half is either vacant or underutilized (255 acres). An additional 126 acres are used for commercial and industrial purposes. Due to the MDC-operated Constitution Beach and the Bell Isle Marshes, East Boston has 91 acres of waterfront land available for public recreation. Initiatives taken by the City in acquisition and development of Jeffries Point Park and the new North Ferry park off Summer Street provide important public access to the East Boston shoreline.

Other recent improvements to the water's edge have transformed formerly vacant areas to uses such as the new East Boston Harborside Community school, and housing at Shore Plaza, both with good public access to the shoreline.

Few areas of the Boston shoreline have more potential for community improvement than the East Boston water-

front. Although it served the clipper era well, present port uses are constrained by lack of space and inadequate access roads. Piers 1, 3, and 4, owned by Massport, once housed an active general cargo terminal, but the piers are now unused or used only occasionally for tying up out-of-service ships or surface storage of vehicles.

Continued non-use of this important segment of the harborfront is unacceptable to the community and the City. Increasing East Boston's supply of open space along the water, gaining additional public access to the water, boat launch areas, and walkways, combined with new community housing and employment are obvious opportunities for these piers. Similar public and private development opportunities exist along other underutilized portions of East Boston's waterfront between North Ferry Park and the new Heritage Apartments elderly housing, and along Border Street on one of the Donald McKay shipbuilding locations, and the Old Bromfield shipbuilding properties. These opportunities could be realized while preserving East Boston's historic marine industrial waterfront and providing jobs and tax revenues.



Charlestown

22 Older than Boston, Charlestown was founded in 1629 by a small group of settlers from the Massachusetts Bay Company. The Revolution saw the burning of Charlestown, its immediate rebuilding after the war, and, in 1786, its connection to the Boston peninsula by the old Charlestown bridge. With the influx of Irish immigrants, its population doubled in the 1850's. The Charlestown Navy Yard, built in the early 1800's served as the town's chief employer building 35 warships between 1825 and 1868. From the earliest times, commercial and residential areas have been separate with housing situated on the hillsides and industry located along the water's edge. This distinction is even more pronounced today with the heavy industrial character of the waterfront separated from the neighborhood by the Tobin Bridge on the east and the Boston and Maine Railroad to the north. The eastern waterfront is dominated by the former Boston Naval Shipyard, and the northern waterfront along the Mystic is industrialized with marine terminals including the Moran Containerport, Wiggins Terminal and warehouses and dock facilities for ships carrying raw sugar, cement, scrap and general cargo.

Charlestown's waterfront properties comprise about 342 acres, nearly all of which are used for commercial and industrial purposes (178 acres), or are predominantly vacant but used for commercial and industrial outdoor storage (135 acres). Remaining land uses, comprising 10 percent of the total, consist of some residential uses along the Little Mystic Channel and public recreational areas

on the east waterfront (USS Constitution Park and Paul Revere Landing) and public open space areas along Little Mystic Channel.

Only in the past half-decade, has Charlestown begun to realize new opportunities on the waterfront. The closing of the Boston Naval Shipyard at Charlestown led to the establishment of the 27 acre USS Constitution National Historic Site and the beginning phases of the City-sponsored redevelopment of the 103 acre shipyard by the Boston Redevelopment Authority. The renovated shipyard will provide not only new and rehabilitated housing, but new waterfront parks, walkways, boat basins, and eventually a totally public new edge along the waterfront for the Charlestown community. Additional waterfront improvements have included the recently completed Paul Revere Landing Park at the northern edge of the new Charlestown Dam, the Bunker Hill Pavilion, and the Constitution Marina, used for the mooring of privately-owned boats. Further opportunities for Charlestown's waterfront lie between the Charlestown Bridge and the Bunker Hill Pavilion, where deteriorating wharves and the underutilized Massport owned Hoosiac Pier offer new and exciting opportunities for additional public access to the harbor combined with appropriate new private development adjacent to City Square.



Port of Boston, date not certain (Courtesy of The Peabody Museum of Salem)

Downtown/Fort Point Channel

The wharves of Boston's waterfront were the focus of the city's historic role in maritime commerce. Major landfill and "wharfing out" began in this area in the 17th century with the building of Faneuil Hall, the development of Long Wharf and State Street, headed by the old State House. No other area of the City has gone through so many periods of construction and renovation.

Major changes began in the 1800's, when the bulk of the brick and granite warehouse wharf structures were built. The past decade has seen the waterfront transformed into new and recycled housing, shops, parks, walkways, and markets with much of its historic character preserved. Views of the harbor have been created and small boats crowd the few available private mooring spaces.

Along the North End's waterfront, additional park areas have been created by the City providing this dense neighborhood with active and passive recreational areas along the harbor.

Even with the dramatic changes along this waterfront, many opportunities remain. Underutilized land along the Charles River in the North Station area is currently under detailed planning study by the Boston Redevelopment Authority. It is not unreasonable to consider the eventual extension of the Charles River embankment through the North Station area to the new North End Park as a significant part of a public-private development program for this area. Vacant land on Sargent, Rows and Fosters

Wharves is suitable for private development as well as for expanding public access along the downtown waterfront. Unravelling the tangle and confusion of commuter and excursion boats, and harbor ferries, and providing more adequate terminal facilities, mooring space for private craft and public landings represent major opportunities. These as well as other waterfront improvements in this area are reviewed in the following section of this study.





Opportunities and Constraints

- Potential Terminal Facility
- Wharf Repairs Necessary
- Existing Public Pedestrian Access
- Potential Public Pedestrian Access
- Existing Public Open Space
- Potential Public Open Space
- Circulation Conflict
- Views
- Visual Distruption
- Tourist Attraction
- Historic Features
- Potential Public Landings for Private Pleasure Boats
- Protected Mooring Area
- Unprotected Mooring Area
- Parking Lot
- Parking Garage

Marine Park, South Boston, circa 1890's
(Halliday Historic Photograph Co.
Courtesy of The Society
for the Preservation of
New England
Antiquities)



South Boston

- 26 South Boston developed in the 1800's; spurred by immigrants from Ireland who found jobs in nearby foundries, lumber, wool and textile industries. Its shorelines offer the extremes between industrial and marine related commercial uses to the north, and the residential and public beach areas overlooking Dorchester Bay and the harbor to the south. About half of South Boston's 600 acres of waterfront property are used for commercial and industrial purposes, while 233 acres are used for public recreation along the southern shoreline. Large amounts of vacant and under-utilized properties are situated along portions of Fort Point Channel and at Piers 1, 2 and 3.

Large tracts of industrial property mark the northern part of South Boston. The City's Economic Development and Industrial Corporation seized the chance provided by the closing of the South Boston Naval Annex, to create Boston's largest industrial park, the Boston Marine Industrial Park (BMIP). A portion of the site will eventually be the location of Boston's Third Containerport. Adjacent to BMIP, the Massport Fish Pier is being rehabilitated; Commonwealth Pier is under study for upgrading for major convention/exhibit space; and private development proposals for Piers 1, 2 and 3, the former Penn Central Yards, and Boston Wharf Company properties are numerous.

Many of these developments will have a profound impact upon a major segment of Boston's harborfront. Productive economic re-uses and public access will transform

the Fort Point Channel area, while historic preservation efforts will maintain its physical character and architectural unity. The recent efforts of the Children's and Transportation Museums utilizing a recycled building and creating a public park along the channel can serve as a model for future development efforts.

South Boston's southern waterfront, unlike that of any other neighborhood along the harborfront, is lined with people swimming, fishing and picnicking. From the historic Fort Independence at Castle Island to Carson Beach, and including Pleasure Bay, Marine Park, City Point Beach and the L Street Beach and Bath House, its shoreline overlooks the bay, the harbor, and some of the harbor's islands and is available for continuous public use and enjoyment.



Boston Harbor, Rose Standish, 1914 (N. L. Stebbins, photographer. Courtesy of The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities)

Lawleys from Tenean Beach, Dorchester, circa 1900-1910 (Courtesy of The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities)



Dorchester

Dorchester, settled in 1630, became a farming area with Dorchester Bay and the Neponset River providing the basis for small commercial villages at Lower Mills and near Commercial Point. However, it shares little of Boston's maritime history and has relatively little public access to the waterfront. Although parcels of land abutting the bay total over 610 acres, the Southeast Expressway comprises a large part of the waterfront. Much of the shoreline is vacant (about 259 acres) and 72 acres are used for public purposes. Industrial and commercial uses occupy another 200 acres.

The shoreline is lined with such uses as the former Hallet Street Dump, Port Norfolk, the Boston Gas Company property on Commercial Point shared with the Old Colony Yacht Club, Columbia Point, and the heavily used Malibu and Tenean beaches owned by MDC. Columbia Point recently became the home of a campus of the University of Massachusetts and the Kennedy Library. The City and the Columbia Point Community Task Force are pursuing the construction of new housing, public open space and supporting public and private facilities here.

In Port Norfolk, inappropriate waterfront uses should be relocated to open development options for housing and public open space. Also, implementation of MDC plans for recreation on the former Hallet Street Dump property would improve the shoreline.

Public Transportation

The downtown waterfront presently serves as the embarking and arrival point for a variety of boats utilizing the harbor as a major transportation route. Commuter boats to the South Shore, ferries to the Harbor Islands, excursion boats, launch boats, and concert cruise boats all compete for docking space at Long and Rowes Wharves. Facilities for these activities are limited and in need of improvement. Detailed recommendations are contained in the following section of this study.

In addition, opportunities exist for implementing an Inner Harbor public ferry system connecting all of Boston's harborfront neighborhoods, servicing normal intra-city trips as well as facilitating the millions of visitor trips made annually to points of interest throughout Boston Harbor.

Already under discussion are ferry systems which would link the former ferry dock in East Boston with Downtown and a public ferry service linking the USS Constitution National Historic Park and the former Charlestown Shipyard with Downtown and the Kennedy Library at Columbia Point. The opportunities for expanded ferry and water taxi service are numerous. Boston's Inner Harbor remains an underused transportation asset for East Boston, Charlestown, Downtown, South Boston, Dorchester, as well as for the Harbor Islands and for expanded commuter routes to the South and North Shores.

Downtown/Fort Point Channel

*Waterfront Park
Terry McKay,
photographer*



Introduction

28 Through World War II, the downtown and Fort Point Channel waterfronts were active parts of Boston's maritime commerce. Since the end of the war, technological changes in the shipping industry resulted in the concentration of these uses at specialized facilities elsewhere in the City. When the Waterfront Urban Renewal Area was designated in 1965, many of the wharves in this area were abandoned and deteriorating. However, much has happened in the last decade. The urban renewal project allowed for the massive infusion of public funds which was quickly followed by private investment. Renovations of wharf buildings and granite warehouses for residential use, the construction of the Walk-to-the-Sea, downtown Waterfront Park, the New England Aquarium, the Museum of Transportation, the Children's Museum, and the Tea Party Ship Museum are some examples of the redevelopment which has begun to fill the gaps left by the departure of commercial shipping.

During the next decade, the downtown Fort Point Channel waterfront will continue to change. The hotel on Long Wharf, the refurbishment of the New England Telephone and Telegraph building, the proposed apartment complex for Rowes-Fosters Wharves, renovations to the 19th century buildings along Fort Point Channel for residential and commercial use, multi-faceted development on Piers 1-3, and rehabilitation of Russia Wharf are only a few of the projects now under consideration. There are also transportation proposals such as a renovated Aquarium Station, a new, relocated Northern Avenue Bridge, addi-

tional commuter boat and harbor shuttle service and improvements to South Station, which will become realities.

However, public and private entities and individuals have different objectives for this portion of the waterfront. As development pressures intensify, unravelling the tangle of old and new conflicting uses becomes increasingly important.

Because of the presence of many unresolved issues and the need for public policy guidance, the Boston Redevelopment Authority felt it appropriate to study this portion of the waterfront in detail. A development framework needed to be formulated which would insure public access to and along the water's edge, public open spaces to accommodate the increasing numbers of people who will live, work and visit the waterfront, improved connections between the MBTA and water transportation, and mooring space for the different categories of boats compatible with the scale and character of the downtown waterfront.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority retained Sasaki Associates of Watertown, Massachusetts, and designers of Boston's Waterfront Park to assist in the preparation of land and water use guidelines for its use in guiding and resolving development conflicts in this area.



The following planning goals were identified during the course of the study:

- To assure adequate public (including the handicapped public) access to, and open space along, the water's edge.
- To better accommodate boating uses, to anticipate their growth and to provide an orderly program for their expansion, considering both waterside and landside space and functional needs.
- To create opportunities for sound, higher density development that will be compatible with other waterfront uses.
- To improve linkages between the MBTA and commuter/tourist/excursion boats.
- To preserve and enhance environmental and navigational conditions in the harbor.
- To assure that contemporary design and new public spaces reflect the waterfront's historic past.
- To propose a public strategy for dealing with harbor issues.





Existing Conditions

The study area includes the area from Commercial Wharf south to and including the Fort Point Channel, around Piers 1-3 to Pier 4. It encompasses parts of the Faneuil Hall Marketplace, the North End, Financial District, South Station, and the South Postal Annex of the United States Post Office. The primary focus is on the area east of the Central Artery along the downtown harborfront and the shoreline of Fort Point Channel.

The area is bounded on the north by the North End and waterfront residential neighborhoods and on the south-east by the emerging Fort Point Channel area with its old warehouses, new museums, art galleries, offices, and apartments.

Landside Uses

At the northern edge of the downtown Waterfront Park, Long Wharf is the site of the renovated Chart and Customs Houses, the temporary ticket booths, and docking facilities of Boston Harbor Cruises and the Bay State, Spray, and Provincetown Steamship Company, and the berthing space of the Boston Pilots. A hotel, wharf reconstruction, and a public open space system are planned for Long Wharf.

East of Long Wharf, the New England Telephone Building, originally a major switching center, is now being converted to office use. Then comes the Aquarium and its

*Chart House
Long Wharf (BRA)*



*The Spray
Long Wharf
(Sasaki Associates)*



barge "Discovery" followed by the twin Harbor Towers apartments.

Below Harbor Towers lie Rowes-Fosters Wharves, owned by the BRA and leased to a parking concern and the Massachusetts Bay Lines. Almost half of Fosters and about one-fifth of Rowes are fenced off from public use because of the unsafe, deteriorated conditions.

South of these wharves, the A.P. Wilcox Warehouse and the Appraisers Building owned by the United States General Services Administration (G.S.A.) are in good condition except for the shed and pier behind the warehouse which are slowly falling into the water. The G.S.A. plans to renovate its buildings for the use of the U.S. Coast Guard and other federal offices.

The Northern Avenue Bridge, a swinging bridge manned 24 hours a day by bridge tenders who occupy the small building at the northern terminus of the bridge's support structure spans Fort Point Channel. Two retail fishing businesses, James Hook and Neptune Lobster and Seafood Company, are located adjacent to the west and east end of the bridge, respectively. On the west side, moving south from the bridge toward Congress Street, the Sheraton Building abuts the channel, followed by over an acre of parking. An electrical substation, Russia Wharf, and the two buildings in the process of being renovated by the Russia Wharf Company border the parking lot's southern end.

The new quarters of the Federal Reserve Bank occupy the entire block bordered by Atlantic and Dorchester Avenues and Congress and Summer Streets. Improved sidewalks along Congress Street provide access to the Congress Street Bridge, the Tea Party Ship, the Museum of Transportation, the Children's Museum, the soon-to-be developed Fiedler Fire Museum, and the Fort Point Channel area. The Congress Street Bridge is not manned and can be opened only in emergencies.

South Station, Stone and Webster Engineering and the U.S. Post Office South Postal Annex fill the area adjacent to the channel below the Summer Street Bridge.

Crossing over to the eastern side of the channel and moving north, buildings form a solid wall along the water's edge between the Summer and Congress Street Bridges. Then, at Congress Street, an open promenade and sitting area on Museum Wharf and behind Victoria Station Restaurant open up the view to the channel.

Behind the museums lie 33 acres of Boston Wharf Company property. Plans for its re-use call for rehabilitation and new construction for a variety of mixed uses; housing, light industry, and offices with the emphasis on housing north of Congress Street. At the northern edge of the Boston Wharf Company property lie the old Penn Central yards proposed for eventual development as office buildings or a trade center by Broderick Development.

Piers 1-4 contain over thirty acres owned by Anthony Athanas. At present, the area is used for Anthony's Pier 4 restaurant, parking and A.C. Cruise, a small tourist/excursion boat company.

Waterside Uses

Traveling through the same area by water yields another perspective. Private pleasure boats are moored at Lewis and Commercial Wharves. The bulkhead at the edge of Waterfront Park adjacent to shallow water is bare of boats. Pilot boats and tourist/excursion craft float beside portions of Long Wharf. The Aquarium's research vessel, the Edgerton, docks along the northern flank of Central Wharf. The hovermarine commuter boat from Hingham uses a second, recently constructed, floating dock on this wharf on a temporary basis. The Aquarium's exhibit barge, the Discovery, is permanently moored on the wharf's southern face.

Off India Wharf, below Harbor Towers, extend the slips and moorings of the Boston Harbor Sailing Club. From the southern edge of this wharf down Fort Point Channel to the Summer Street Bridge, the pierheads and bulkheads are in various states of disrepair.

Associated with both the Summer and Congress Street Bridges are a tangle of raised pipes and rotting piers which present hazards to navigation. The bulkhead from this point south appears to be in good condition.

- 32 On the east side of Fort Point Channel after the Congress Street Bridge, the bulkhead is in fairly good condition. The Museum of Transportation plans repairs and dock construction to display such antique craft as a steam launch, a Herreshoff 12 1/2 Bullseye, and a 1920 livery type wooden canoe.

The bridge tenders still swing the Northern Avenue Bridge open to let large boats in and out of the channel, but they sometimes have difficulty closing it in the hot summer months.

The bulkhead of Piers 1-4 appears to be in good condition.





Current Issues

Landside Issues

Public access to many parts of the Downtown/Fort Point Channel is constrained and difficult. Winding streets, dangerous intersections, inadequate lighting and signage, and the Central Artery combine to complicate pedestrian access to the harborfront.

These difficulties do not discourage flocks of people from visiting waterfront attractions. Between June of 1978 and June of 1979, 936,000 people visited the Aquarium. In a similar period, 150,000 visitors toured the Tea Party Ship moored alongside a recycled World War II ammunition barge next to the Congress Street Bridge. On Museum Wharf on Fort Point Channel in South Boston, the Museum of Transportation opened on July 1st of this year and projects a 250,000 annual visitorship. The Children's Museum, located in the same building, expects 500,000 children and parents per year.

Institutions such as these are not the only magnets. On Long Wharf, between June and August of this year, up to 9,000 people boarded the tourist/excursion boats per day to tour the Harbor Islands, travel to Provincetown, or listen to concerts in the evening. Some 120 commuters embark and disembark each day from the Hovermarine to Hingham at Central Wharf. At peak periods over 3,000 passengers per day board commuter and tourist/excursion boats on Rowes Wharf (650 commuter and 2,450 tourist). At Pier 1, up to 250 passengers per day enjoy cruises aboard the Virginia C.

People also come to the waterfront to eat. Before the museums opened at Museum wharf, the Hood Milk Bottle fed approximately 500 people per day. Numerous other restaurants around this portion of the harbor are also flourishing and attracting significant numbers of people.

People bring brown lunch bags or food from neighboring restaurants to the existing public open spaces. At lunch time on any sunny day, Waterfront Park, Central Wharf, Museum Wharf, and the area next to Victoria Station are jammed with people.

Some people come to the waterfront for no other purpose than to stroll and look at the water. There is almost always someone peering through the chain-link fence at the end of Long Wharf or sitting in one of the parking lots along the water's edge staring out at the harbor.

Only the adventurous see the harbor from more than the four vantage points mentioned above. Most people do not witness the spectacular views available because rotting decking and fenced off parking lots deprive them of access to the prime viewing positions. Pedestrian density will increase with the completion of new offices, apartments, excursion boats, hotels, restaurants, and shops. Additional pedestrian access should be planned before this new development takes place. The planning of what will become a major adjunct to Boston's downtown should not omit this exciting opportunity to incorporate an entire pedestrian walkway and open space system as one element in the development infrastructure.

Waterside Issues

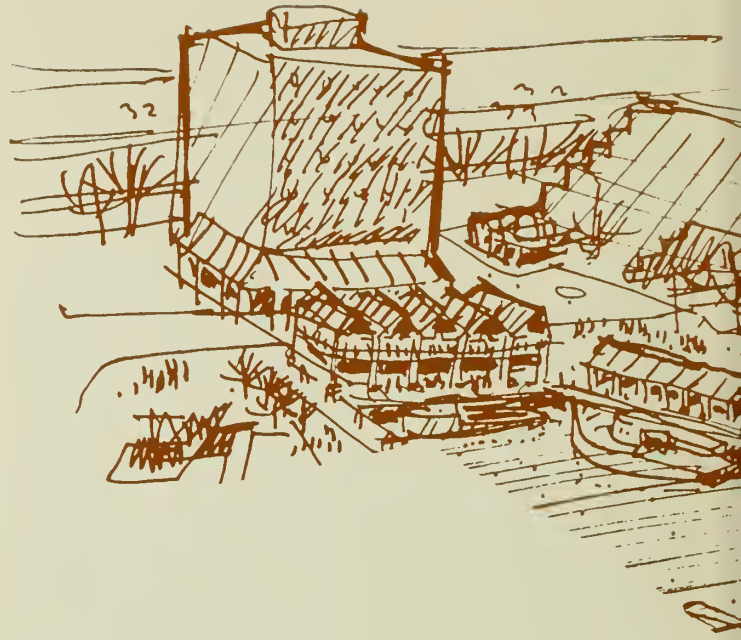
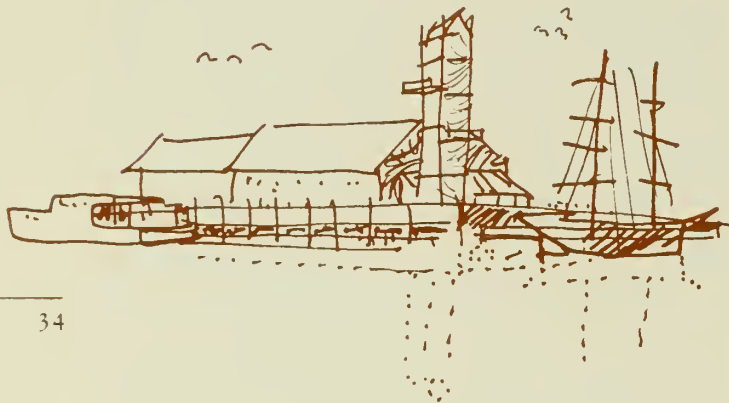
The pedestrian question is complicated by the presence of other uses on the harbor edge and must be viewed in context with waterside functions. Pedestrian access along this edge must be designed so as to not inhibit the operation or threaten the security of the tourist/excursion, commuter, private pleasure, research/scientific, and exhibit/historic boats.

People on land are not the only ones with problems reaching the interface of land and sea. The decaying wharves and random isolated piles projecting out of the water or just below the surface pose substantial hazards to boat owners. Commuter and tourist/excursion boat operators conduct their business despite substandard docking spaces and inadequate landside facilities. Their passengers have few places to sit or seek protection from inclement weather while waiting for their boats.

Planning efforts for new developments should address the needs of water-dependent uses. Wharves will have to be repaired; transportation and parking issues will have to be addressed in detail; and navigational and environmental considerations will have to be reviewed. Some marine functions need very little landside space and are able to float most of their facilities on the water. Others require ground level space, but need not occupy upper levels.

When the requirements for different uses are sorted out, their conflicts and compatibilities become clear and design criteria emerge. The integration of water-enhanced and water-dependent uses at certain locations represents an exciting design opportunity. The following section describes some proposals for achieving these objectives and resolving these conflicts in the Downtown/Fort Point Channel Area.

*Long Wharf
Public Landing*



The Plan

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

To assure adequate public (including the handicapped public) access to, and open space along, the water's edge.

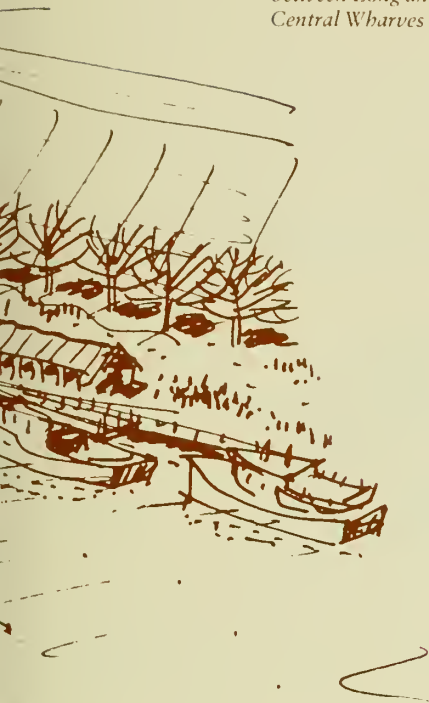
- Provide improved pedestrian access which is safe, convenient, pleasant, clearly identified by day and night, and available to the handicapped from the downtown and residential neighborhoods to the water's edge.
- Extend the parks and walking systems of Boston to include a unified pedestrian way along the water's edge with as much exposure to the water as possible without obstructing the effective operation and security of water-dependent and water-enhanced uses abutting the harbor.

Clarify State Street as a major pedestrian link to the waterfront from downtown.

Clarify Broad Street as a second major pedestrian link to the waterfront.

Clarify India, Summer, and Congress Streets as minor pedestrian links to the waterfront.

*Terminal Facility
between Long and
Central Wharves*



Improve Atlantic Avenue as the link between walks from the downtown and walks to and along the water's edge, as the site for bus stops, and as a route to South and Aquarium MBTA Stations. Remove the parking lane on the harbor side of Atlantic Avenue and devote the recaptured space to improved signage, lights, street furniture, and planting.

- Improve pedestrian access along the water's edge by encouraging public and private entities to contribute to a comprehensive public access system as part of their development or renovation plans.
- Consider changes in elevation of pedestrian access along the water's edge, when such changes are necessary to the successful function of a water-dependent or water-enhanced use.
- Incorporate bicycle racks into the public access system.

To better accommodate boating uses, to anticipate their growth and to provide an orderly program for their expansion, considering both waterside and landside space and functional needs.

- Better accommodate boating and tourist excursion operations at both Long and Rows-Fosters Wharves.

Encourage the establishment of indoor and outdoor passenger waiting areas which facilitate the efficient and comfortable loading and unloading of passengers in all seasons.

Provide clearly marked pedestrian access to existing public land and water transportation.

Encourage the design of workable service and support functions such as truck loading zones, bus layover areas, auto/taxi/bus drop-off areas, employee parking, administrative offices, ticketing facilities, and food and drink preparation.

Improve and expand docking space through the repair of existing bulkheads and pierheads or through the introduction of floating docks, dolphins and reinforcement of pier corners and wharf accessories where necessary.

Improve public access by water to such coastal, cultural, historic, and recreational facilities as the Harbor Islands State Park, the U.S.S. Constitution Historic Site, and the Kennedy Library. Provide the public with information on the location of departure points.

Encourage flexible docking systems with levels to accommodate boats of different sizes including gangway ramps.

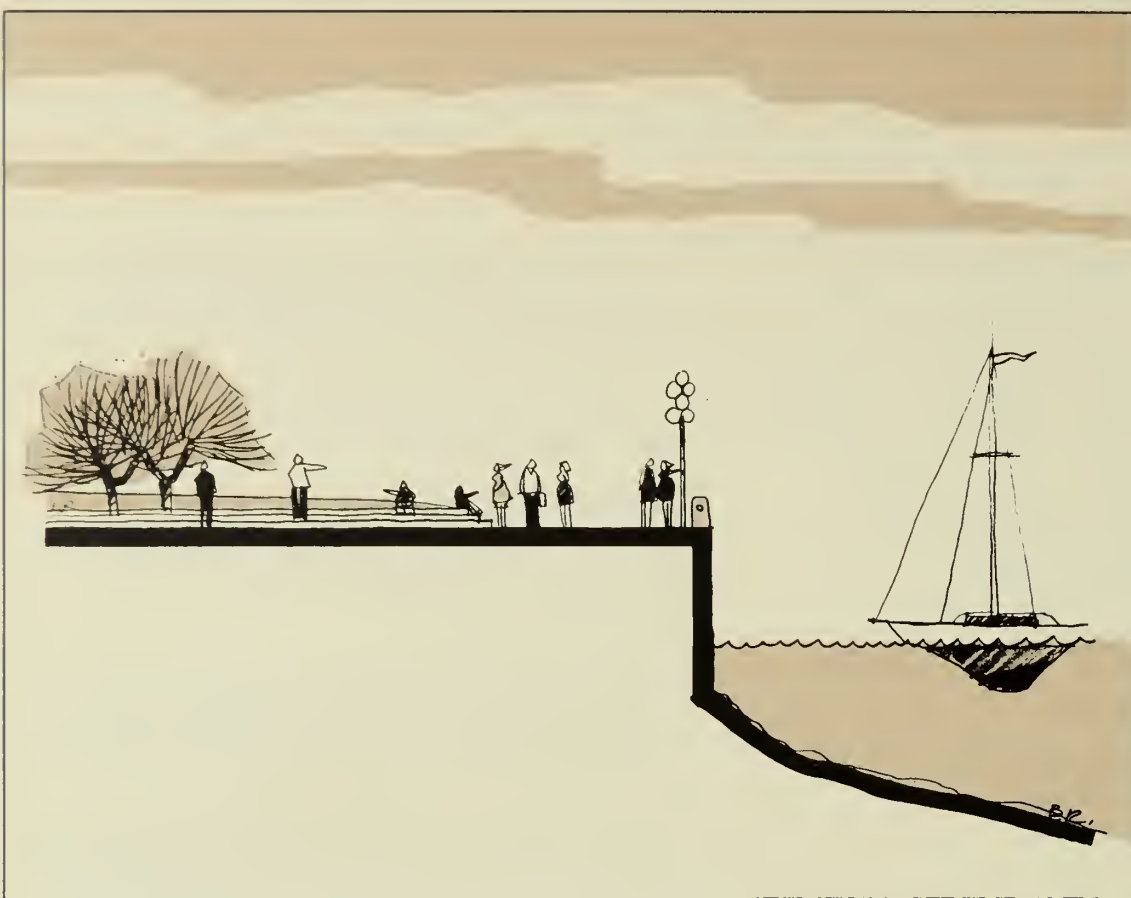
- Improve mooring space for private craft.

Encourage the establishment of secure boat basin facilities in Fort Point Channel.

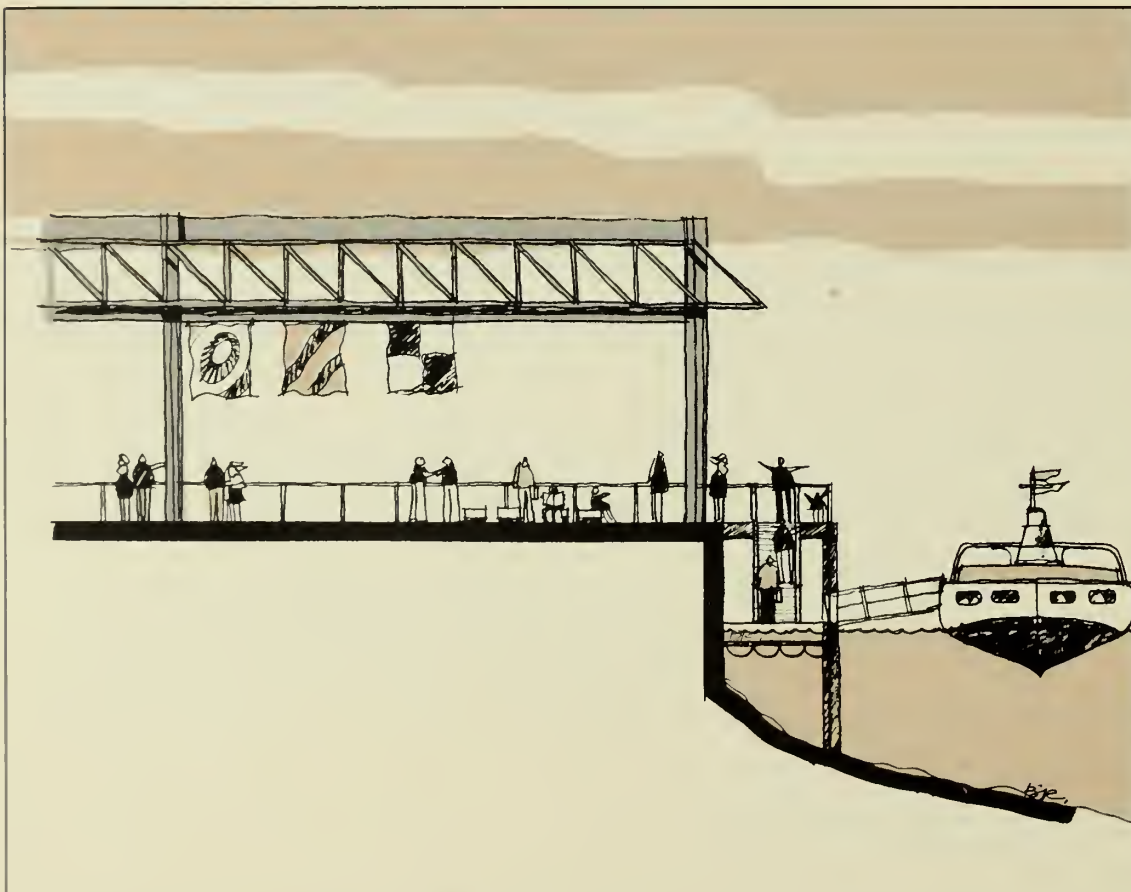
Encourage the development of a public landing(s) for boats visiting the downtown waterfront in the vicinity of Long Wharf and Waterfront Park.

To create opportunities for sound, higher-density development that will be compatible with other waterfront uses.

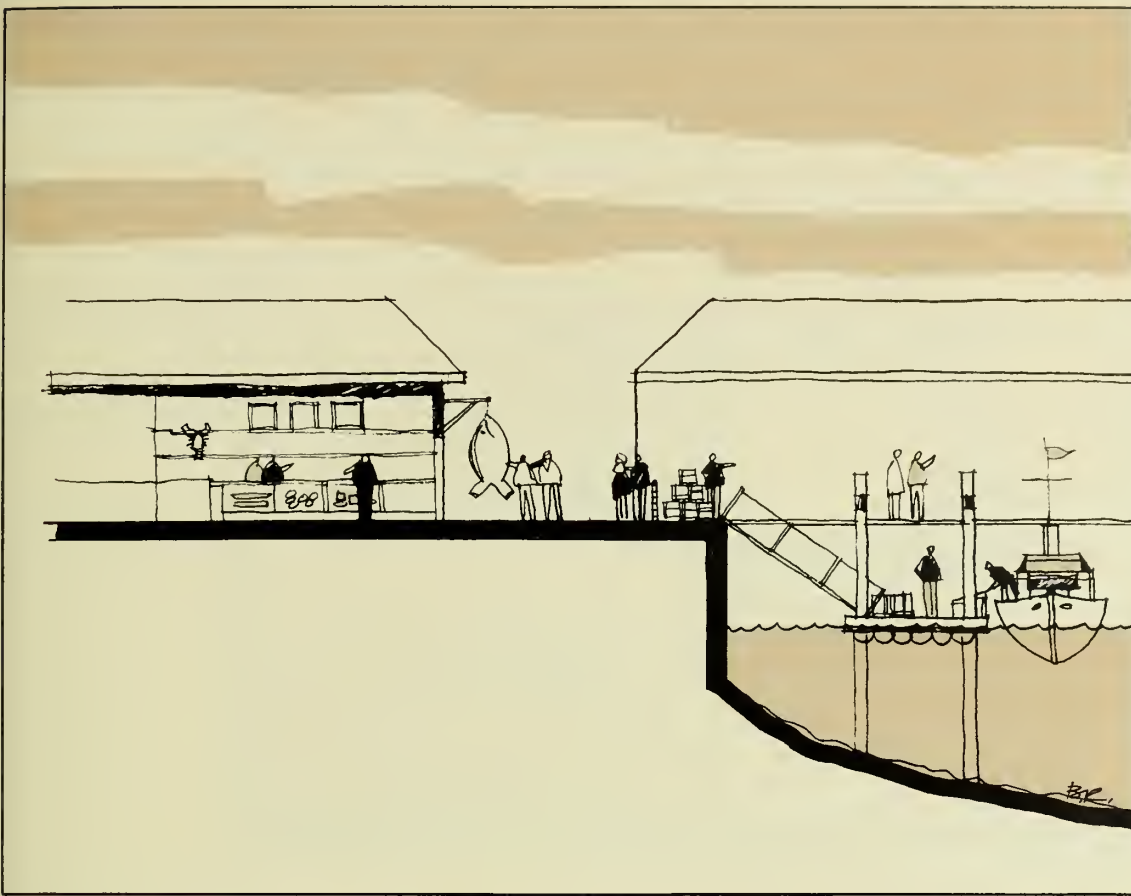
- Encourage a mix of water-dependent and water-enhanced uses in the downtown waterfront with priority given to water-dependent uses and public access on the ground level along the water's edge.
- Encourage developers constructing new facilities or renovating existing buildings for water-enhanced uses to provide public access to the water's edge and to lease space to water-dependent uses which are compatible with their projected uses in one or more of the following ways:



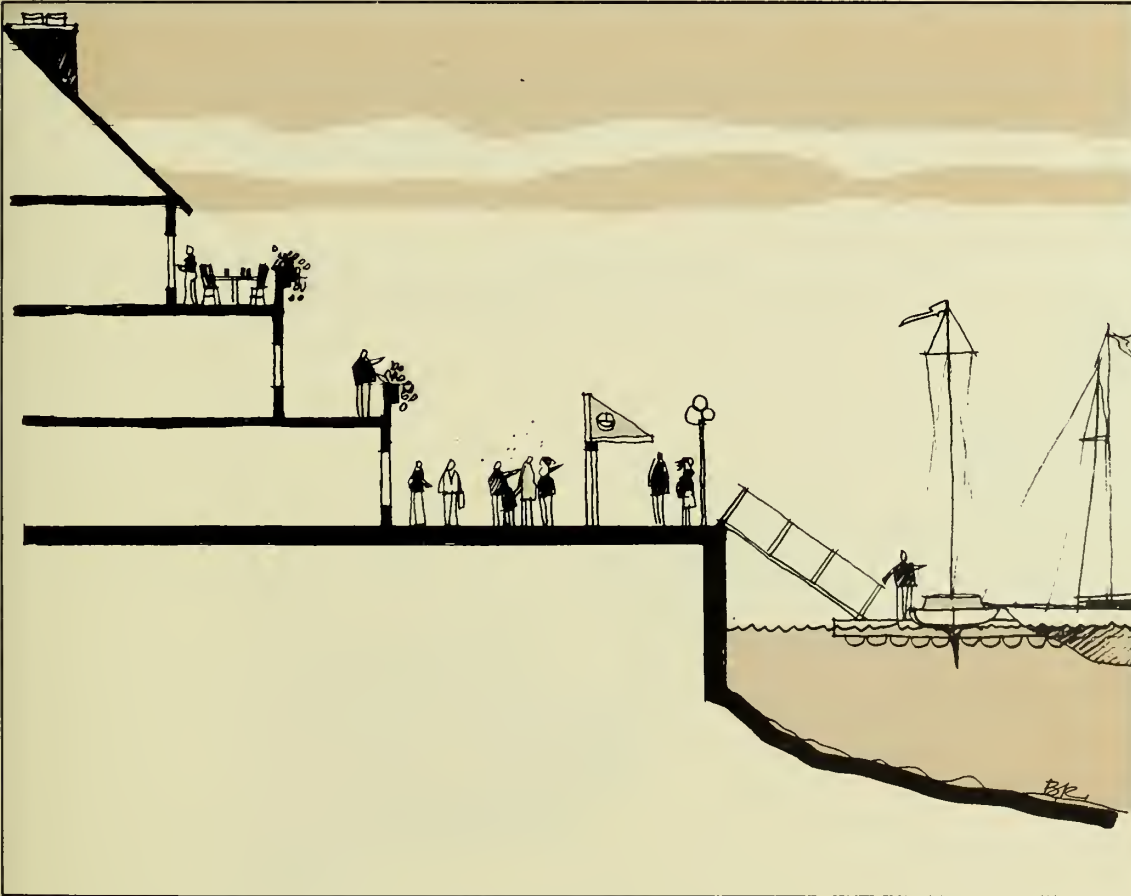
Locate the public way along the water's edge.



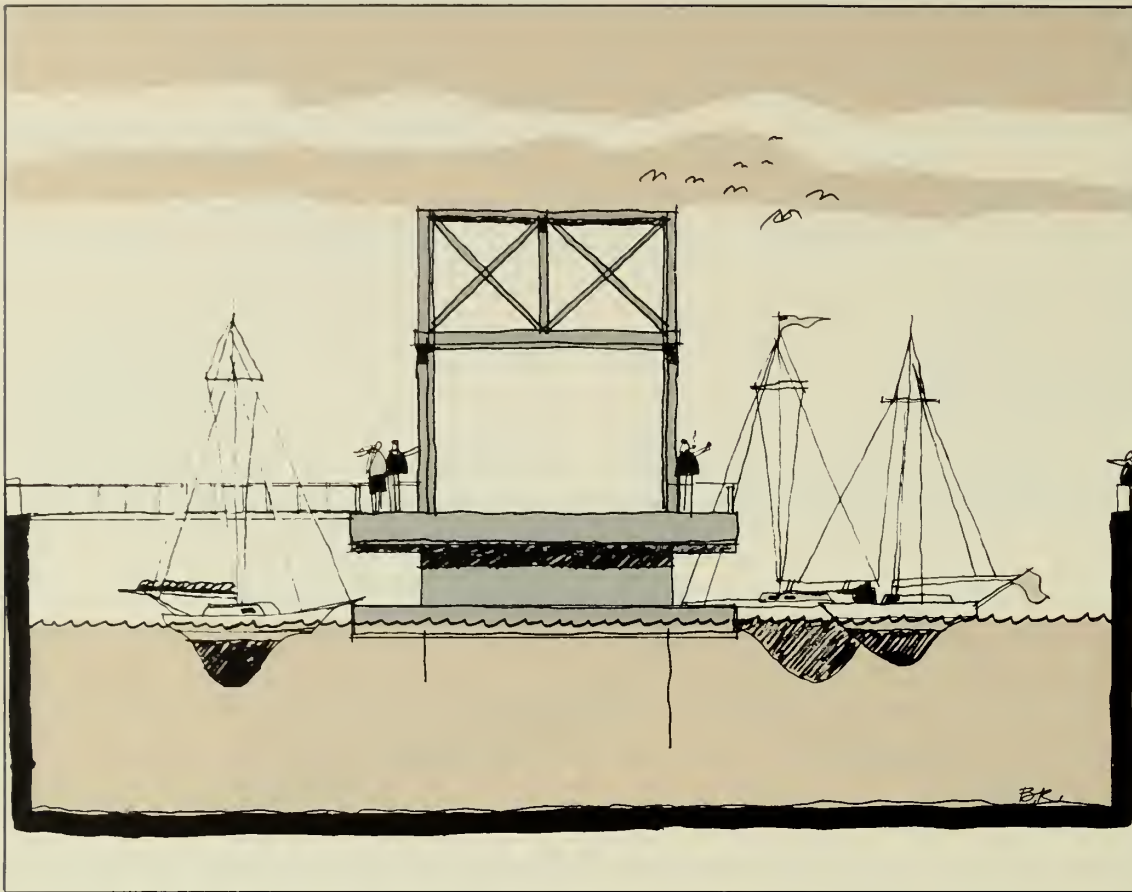
Locate the public way along the water's edge except when passengers are embarking or disembarking from commuter or tourist excursion boats. Provide a loop or extra width for the use of pedestrians while the public way along the water's edge is occupied by passengers.



Loop the public way around an intersecting water-dependent use such as lobster trap storage area.

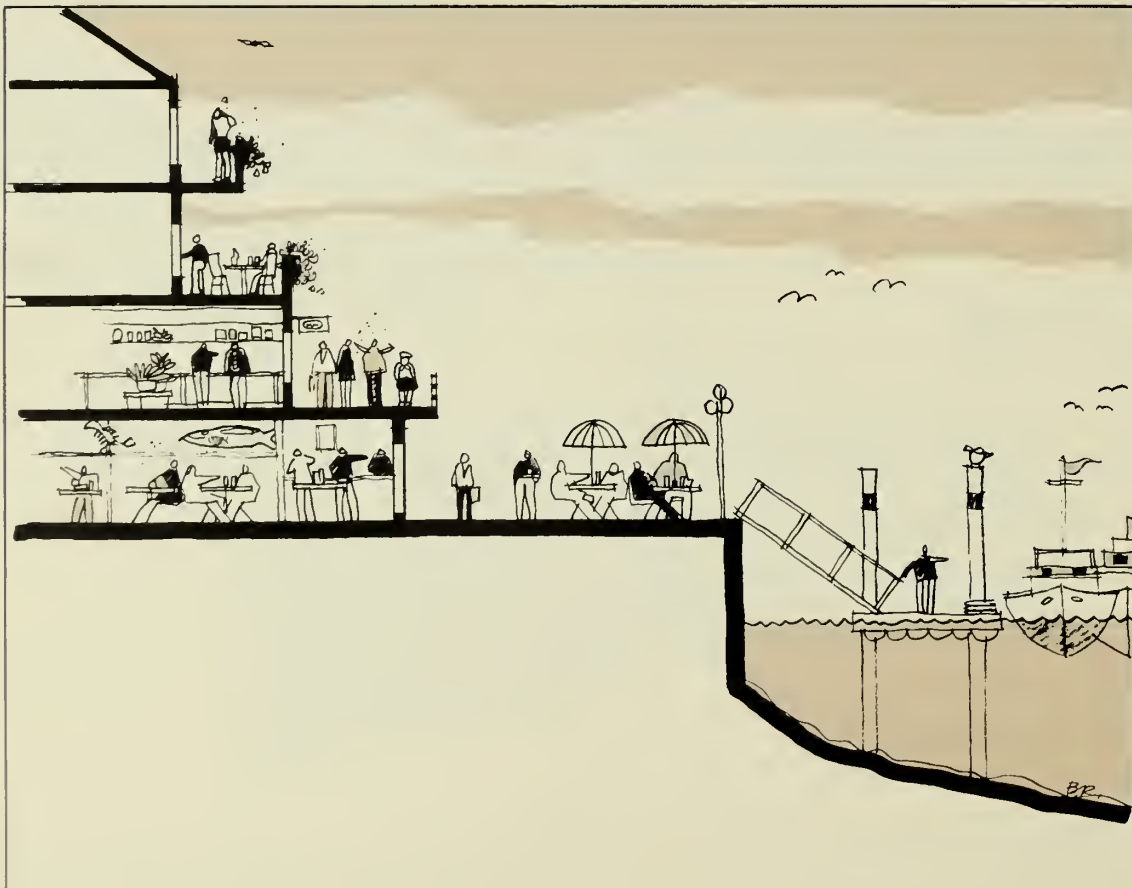


Separate the public way from the water's edge to provide security for an adjacent water-dependent use such as a private pleasure boat basin.



Locate the public way along the water's edge. Use water to separate the public from and provide security for an adjacent water-dependent use.

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Locate the public way on a second level over a water-enhanced use such as a restaurant or cafe.



Locate the public way on a second level over water-enhanced use such as apartments and adjacent to retail space.

- Encourage the incorporation of visual concerns into the early stages of the planning and design of all facilities in the downtown waterfront.
- Review developments proposed near designated or registered historic districts or sites to ensure their compatibility with the historic character of the area.

To improve linkages between the MBTA and commuter/ tourist/excursion boats.

To preserve and enhance environmental and navigational conditions in the harbor.

- Design commuter and tourist/excursion facilities, boat basins and other water-dependent uses to minimize disruption of harbor flushing or restriction of the tidal prism, and excavation or filling in shallow waters.

Carry out dredging strategically to improve navigation, as needed, taking care to avoid undermining existing bulkheads that are to remain.

Retain original "gravity" bulkheads wherever possible, taking care not to add surcharge loads that would reduce their structural stability, to protect them from heavy machinery and to limit excavation in their immediate vicinity.

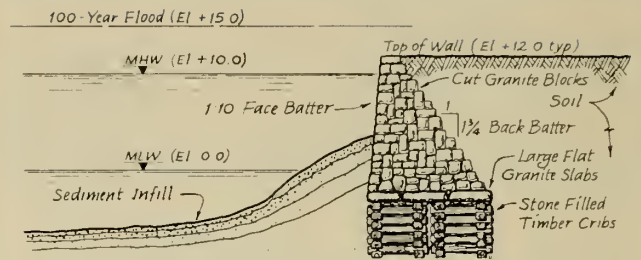
- Ensure that commuter and tourist/excursion facilities, boat basins, and other water-dependent uses are equipped for the proper handling of boat and site-generated sewerage, litter, and refuse.

- Encourage, where possible, multiple use docks common to several property interests.
- Require removal of all unused piers and similar structures in a state of disrepair.
- Permit only jetties, groins, or breakwaters that do not interfere with public access, nor unduly disturb the aquatic ecosystem.

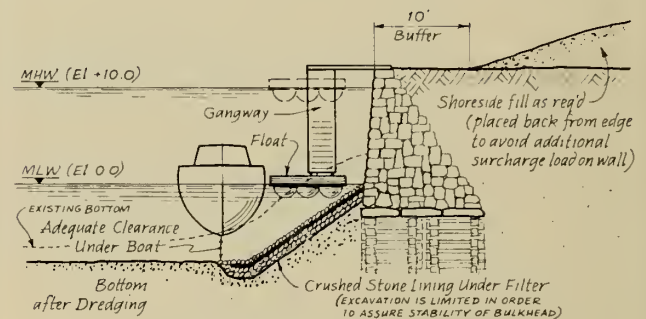
- Preload or use other special techniques to avoid settlement of public access and open space areas due to poor soil conditions.

To assure that contemporary design and new public spaces reflect the waterfront's historic past.

To propose a public strategy for dealing with harbor issues.



Typical Granite "Gravity" Bulkhead



Channel Dredging and Lining

(Integrity of Original Bulkhead is maintained)

Specific Proposals

The following sections describe how these objectives can be applied to specific sites in the Waterfront-Fort Point Channel Area.

Long Wharf

Long Wharf, built between 1711 and 1715 as an extension of King Street, which is now known as State Street, was once Boston's principal pier. Today, the opportunity exists for this wharf to regain its position of primacy in the City's new waterfront.

Long Wharf should be developed for multiple use as public open space, the terminus of the Walk-to-the-Sea, the entrance to the Harbor Islands State Park, the introduction to Boston for visitors sailing or motoring into the harbor, and the focus of a highly functional, interconnected land and water transportation system.

The large open space at the end of Long Wharf should convey to visitors the noteworthy events in Long Wharf's rich history. General Howe's departures for Nova Scotia and the consequent end of the British presence in the city in 1776, the position of the Customs House in maritime trade, and the United Fruit Company's tenure from 1899-1958 are some of the subjects which could be incorporated into an exciting exhibit.

The following recommendations suggest a direction for the renovation and redevelopment of Long Wharf.

Public Access and Open Space

Use sidewalk improvements, lighting and signage to clarify how the Walk-to-the-Sea, Waterfront Park, new Long Wharf hotel, and the northern edge of Long Wharf connect with each other.

Use sidewalk improvements, lighting and signage to clarify how State Street connects the Aquarium, MBTA station, the southern edge of Long Wharf, the commuter/tourist/excursion boats berthed in the adjacent water, and the associated dockside pavilions.

Provide pedestrian paths to and around the water's edge in recognition of the historic 30-foot wide public way established in 1709 by Boston's selectmen and the builders of the wharf "for use forever" by the public.

Develop two public open spaces: one between the proposed hotel, the Chart House, and the proposed public landing and the other at the terminus of the "Walk-to-the-Sea."

Program the first open space as a recreation area for the public landing, the front yard at the Chart House and the proposed hotel, and an outdoor eating area.

Program the second open space as the Long Wharf Historic Park with information about its history.

Water-dependent Uses

Develop a public landing area for visiting pleasure craft at the terminus of the Walk-to-the-Sea and short-term mooring space in the area designated on the plan.

Add a covered landside accommodation for the public landing, the Long Wharf Historic Park, and the Harbor Islands State Park. Staff and signage in this structure will orient incoming yachtsmen, island visitors, and wharf tourists.

Provide floating docks adjacent to the portion of the wharf's periphery as illustrated in the plan for the use of pilot boats, visiting pleasure craft, water taxis, commuter boats, and tourist excursion boats.

Construct sheltered sitting pavilions for the use of waiting boat passengers and the general public parallel to the floating docks.

Provide a tower for the use of the Harbor Master and for harbor viewing by the public.

*Proposed Changes
Long, Central and
India Wharves*



*Development
Opportunities
Rowes Fosters Wharves*



*Boat Basin for Private
Pleasure Boats
Fort Point Channel*



Block Between Long and Central Wharves

The block between Long and Central Wharves occupies a pivotal position between Waterfront Park, the existing and proposed activities on Long Wharf, and the Aquarium. Large numbers of people walk through there on their way between these harbor attractions. As new development efforts come to fruition, the number of pedestrians will increase.

The New England Telephone and Telegraph building's central location between the wharves offers an opportunity as the landside accommodation for the commuter/tourist/excursion boats operators. Over 800 linear feet of berthing space on the southern edge of Long Wharf and 600 feet of berthing space on the northern flank of Central Wharf offer the kind of waterside configuration necessary to the future operation of these boats.

The following recommendations suggest methods of taking advantage of the opportunities that exist in this area.

Public Access and Open Space

Use lighting to clarify the connection between State Street, the New England and Telegraph building, and the proposed commuter/tourist/excursion boat facilities.

Water-Dependent Uses

Explore utilizing a portion of the first floor of the telephone building as a waiting area for boat passengers and as administrative offices for boat operators.

Extend the bulkhead between these wharves so that it lines up with the bulkhead running between Central and India Wharves.

Construct an outdoor covered waiting area for passengers over the new land created behind this extension.

Reinforce the functional relationships between the first floor of the telephone building and the covered waiting area by extending the sidewalk in front of the telephone building, and realigning the street between the two facilities and using a special kind of paving for this portion of the street.

India Wharf

(Area encompassing the Harbor Towers Parking Garage and Harbor Towers).

Improved public access to and through this area would help connect it to the downtown and improve pedestrian circulation up and down the water's edge. It would reduce the walking distance and enhance the walk to the Aquarium MBTA Station for the future residents of the

apartment complex proposed for Rowes-Fosters Wharves.

The following recommendations suggest ways of treating this area:

Use lighting to clarify the connection between Milk Street and Central Wharf.

Develop a park between Harbor Towers and Rowes Wharf.

Support the continuation of private pleasure boating activities in the water of this area with linkage to the necessary landside support.

Rowes-Fosters Wharves—Appraisers Building

Rowes-Fosters Wharves represent a major development opportunity for the city. By capitalizing on their location on Boston Harbor and encouraging a plan which provides for the integration of water-dependent and water-enhanced uses, the City will take the lead in innovative and sound harbor development.

The following recommendations suggest methods of realizing these opportunities.

Public Access and Open Space

Use lighting and signage to clarify how Broad Street and the downtown connects the financial district and Rowes-Fosters Wharves connect to each other.

Provide a visual terminus for the Broad Street linkage to the sea with an open space adjacent to the former location of the historic ferry slip.

Provide finger paths to the water's edge along the northern edge of A.P. Wilcox building and the southern edge of the Appraiser's Building.

Provide public access along the water's edge along reconstructed piers in front of the A.P. Wilcox Warehouse and the Appraiser's Building.

Develop a mini-park between India and Rowes Wharves to continue the open space system forming the harbor walk, to provide an amenity for the proposed residences adjacent to it, and to provide an outdoor eating area for the adjacent business community and the general public.

Extend pedestrian access along the water's edge.

Water-enhanced and Water-dependent Uses

Create a parcel for a private mid-rise residential development on Rows Wharf.

Allocate a portion of the ground level to water-dependent uses related to the small private pleasure boat basin associated with the mini-park described above.

Orient the development to provide views from Atlantic Avenue to the harbor.

Require structured parking.

Create a mixed-use development opportunity on Fosters Wharf which includes a parcel for a private mid-rise residential development and structured parking on the northern half and a parcel for the landside accommodation for the commuter/tourist/excursion boats and water taxis.

Allocate space on the ground floor of the residential development for the support functions of the boat operations.

Incorporate structured parking and a rooftop restaurant/overlook above the boat passenger facilities.

Design the passenger waiting area to permit views from Atlantic Avenue to the harbor through the structure.

44 Provide a covered outdoor waiting space which connects the boats' berthing space with the indoor waiting space and facilitates embarkation/disembarkation.

Encourage the development of a small private pleasure boat basin off the mini-park described above.

Fort Point Channel

Fort Point Channel, neglected and ignored for many years, has recently received increased attention.

As sites along the banks become sites for dramatic new buildings such as the Federal Reserve Bank and Stone and Websters Engineering Corporation, as thousands of visitors flock across its bridges to the recently opened Transportation and Children's Museums, and as new residential, office, and commercial developments are contemplated, planning for its future becomes increasingly important.

The channel and vicinity offer considerable opportunities for new walkways, parks with dramatic views, and lively boat basins. The following recommendations suggest ways of developing this area's potential.

Public Access and Open Space

Use lighting and signage to clarify how Oliver Street connects the Financial District, Fort Hill Square, and the proposed Northern Avenue Bridge to each other. Clarify and improve its connection with the pedestrian overpass over the Central Artery.

Provide a park and pedestrian access to the existing Northern Avenue Bridge, which would be permanently oriented parallel to the channel banks.

Provide pedestrian access along both sides of the proposed Northern Avenue Bridge.

Provide finger paths along the southern edge of the Sheraton Building to Fort Point Channel and the proposed park.

Provide a park which covers an area from the edge of the Sheraton Building to Congress Street for sitting, eating lunch, and viewing the Tea Party Ship Beaver, the water, the antique boats in front of the Museum of Transportation and the Children's Museum.

Use signage to clarify how Congress Street connects the downtown to the Fort Point Channel area.

Use signage to clarify the connection between South Station, Fort Point Channel, and the harbor walk pedestrian system.

Provide public access along the water's edge on both sides of Fort Point Channel and out to Anthony's Pier 4.

Incorporate the open space on Museum Wharf into the harbor walk pedestrian access system.

Provide a park along the water's edge between the proposed and existing Northern Avenue Bridge extending onto Pier 1.

Improve the sidewalk on Northern Avenue for pedestrian use.

Promote dinghy rental and sailing south of the Summer Street Bridge.

Water-dependent Uses

- Construct a tethered, floating breakwater (TFB) in Fort Point Channel at its opening to help still wind and ship generated waves without interfering with natural harbor flushing or impeding the view.
- Establish a major boat basin for sailing and motor, private pleasure boats on the protected waters of Fort Point Channel by extending floats off the base of the permanently turned Northern Avenue Bridge and by developing the first level as a secure landside accommodation for the boat basin.

- Establish a second boat basin for small motorcraft with access off the Summer Street Bridge in the southwestern waters of Fort Point Channel.
- Investigate the function of exposed conduits, pipes, and structures in Fort Point Channel and remove all those which are presently unnecessary.

*Fort Point Channel, 1903
(Courtesy of The
Museum of Transportation)*



Implementation

- 46 Implementation of plans for the protection, rehabilitation and development of waterfront areas is difficult because of several restraints including the following:

The large number of public decision makers involved from all three levels of government.

The state owns all land under water, the federal Government through the Corp of Army Engineers and the Coast Guard controls anything that goes into or floats on top of water. The local conservation commission also has a say on new fill, piles or pollution. In Boston, the problem is further complicated by the presence of Logan Airport because the Federal Aeronautical Administration imposes restrictions on the height of developments in the immediate vicinity of the airport.





The added costs of waterfront development.

Any type of construction along the water, whether it be a park or a structure, is more expensive than it would be elsewhere. Boston's 13 foot tides expose large sections of piers and seawalls to wetting and drying that promote decay and deterioration. The tidal surge seeks to extract the land piled up behind every crack in the seawall. Construction workers employed over, or worse, under the water demand and get special premiums for hazardous duty.

Legal problems.

The age of Boston's waterfront, the legal problems that have resulted over the years from the creation of new land by filling the sea floor, and other legal conflicts over the boundary of the land and water make the legal problems of waterfront development especially challenging.



Development Process

48 To overcome these and other problems that impede development and conservation of the waterfront, a systematic program to support the implementation of plans must be developed.

Several successful alternative models are available for Boston to choose from. Baltimore developed a public-private development entity to fund and manage redevelopment of a harbor many times more deteriorated than any portion of Boston Harbor. The inclusion of a large mixed income housing development in the overall planning enabled the development to receive large scale support from HUD.

New York City took the approach of declaring large sections of the shoreline as a "Gateway National Park," but only after the National Park Service agreed to a participatory planning process that would allow the City and neighborhood residents to have a voice in its design and operation.

Perhaps best known is San Francisco's Bay Conservation and Development Commission. This organization, created in response to large scale filling of the bay for new residential development, controls development around San Francisco Bay by permitting filling only for water-related uses that conform to a specific plan.

The San Francisco experience served as a model for the committees proposed in both the Boston Harbor Associ-

ates state legislation and the Kennedy-Moakley Federal Boston Harbor Recreation Area bill. Although it has worked well in San Francisco, this concept has had a more difficult time being accepted in Boston because of the long tradition of home rule here and because valuable shorefront land is very important to Massachusetts cities and towns which are highly dependent on income from property taxes. This dependence increases the resistance to regional uses such as port facilities and large public beaches which pay no taxes and place large demands on local roads and service systems. Participants in the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Planning process were reminded again and again of the fear local communities have of losing control over the use of their land to a higher level of government.

Boston even has its own model, the conversion of the Charlestown Navy Yard from an abandoned obsolete ship repair facility to an attractive community with housing, jobs, open space, stores, and public facilities. Its design will provide for a high level of historic preservation, the maximum amount of public access to and along the waterfront, and new parks for the existing Charlestown community and the new residents of the shipyard. Boat service will connect the yard to other points in the harbor.

This conversion model contains the following components: (1) public investment in plan development and evaluation of investment needs and returns and of potential returns; (2) a professional evaluation of environmental consequences of alternative development proposals; and (3) an implementation program that combines the public grants from state and federal agencies, the expertise and financial resources of a large scale private developer, and the involvement of a local economic development corporation.

Despite these conflicts and problems, various conflicts have been resolved over the last decade and important developments such as the Moran Terminal and Boston's Waterfront Park have been completed.



Management and Legislation

Demand for land abutting Boston Harbor is strong today and can be expected to remain so for the foreseeable future. Some of this demand comes from traditional port uses (although many of these have taken on a new form and new location requirements due to changes in technology). Other demands come from uses that are relatively new to the waterfront such as housing, parks, hotels, and local commuter boats. Such diversity insures that the market will remain strong despite short-term variations in its various components.

In addition to direct conflicts for the same piece of land, the uses now interested in waterfront locations have external factors that often result in real or feared conflicts between adjoining or even nearby uses. An active port with regular ship traffic provides an attractive backdrop for residential and other people-oriented uses, but the port facilities themselves are often noisy and unattractive to their neighbors. They are major generators of truck traffic and, for security reasons, must be fenced and lighted throughout the night. These conflicts exist in the water as well as on land. Small boat owners and marinas suffer from the wakes of large ships, especially in Boston's narrow Inner Harbor. Likewise, the captains and pilots of the commercial vessels are plagued by the large number of smaller pleasure vessels.

An effective harbor planning and management program could probably provide some relief from these problems. The section of this study dealing with the downtown

waterfront suggests physical design techniques which can reduce conflicts among uses.

Because government has traditionally been involved in the development of harbors (Boston built its first public pier in 1631), a great deal of land abutting the water is owned or otherwise controlled by a public entity. In many areas of Boston where port facilities exist, restrictive "W" waterfront zoning provides the local zoning boards with considerable say in approving most new development proposals. Finally, the recently enacted Coastal Zone Management Plan is supposed to provide a coordinated set of state policies and regulations for control of waterfront land when the new development would require state approval or financial support.

The history of complaints about the management of Board of Harbor and Land Commissioners (1877), is almost as old as the city itself. Early solutions such as the Port of Boston Commission (1953), and later the Massachusetts Port Authority (1956), concentrated their attention on problems related to the maritime commerce. More recently, public and private groups alike have seen the management problem as a much broader one relating to conflicting uses of the limited land and water area that make up Boston Harbor.

On the water, conflicts between cargo ships and pleasure craft remain largely unresolved, to the detriment of both. On land, the conflict between alternative uses have left valuable and scarce waterfront land lying fallow, through lack of ability to reach decisions that will satisfy both the owners and the various government regulatory and funding agencies. In previous decades, conflicts over land use were resolved by simply adding to the available land supply by filling in low lying areas. Increased awareness of the problems resulting from indiscriminate filling and the resulting legislation protecting the waters have essentially eliminated the possibility of made land.

This three part effort with public, private and neighborhood actors, each taking on the most appropriate function, reflects Boston's strong neighborhood orientation and is a useful way of structuring a planning and development process.

Boston need not restrict itself to this one strategy. The Charlestown strategy with the City's planning and development agency (the BRA) and its economic development agency (EDIC) working with major businesses and business leaders, and with neighborhood development groups, is suitable for some of the harborfront communities.

Boston also has had very favorable experience with the National Park Service which maintains six historic sites in Boston. In addition, the legislation creating the six-site Boston National Historic Park contains provision for expansion of the park service's responsibilities to include other important areas of Boston. As the history of Boston Harbor described elsewhere in this report shows, many of these historic sites are on or adjacent to Boston Harbor.

It is therefore proposed that work begin to define and develop a program for a new Boston Harbor Historic Site that would extend from the Constitution Wharf in the North End where Old Ironsides was constructed to Nooks Hill in the Fort Point Channel area of South Boston from which George Washington's cannon reminded the British that they had overstayed their welcome in Boston and it was time to move on. Once the groundwork has been prepared, the Boston Harbor Historic Site can be submitted as an amendment to the original legislation.

regional and "development" vs. "conservation" interests that currently split over most proposals relating to the future of Boston Harbor. The process will be made more difficult by the large size of the commission (26 members) and the large number of representatives appointed by the Governor or one of his appointees (11).

The second major bill dealing with Boston Harbor has been submitted to the United States Congress by Senator Kennedy and Congressman Moakley. While titled the "Boston Harbor National Recreation Area Bill," this act lists as its purpose "to assist local governments to administer sound management policies regulating and guiding development in the Boston Harbor area and on the Boston Harbor Islands." Like the TBHA bill, this legislation calls for the creation of a commission (up to 27 members) of which 11 would represent the Governor or state agencies or authorities. The commission would have one year to develop a plan for the provision of recreation facilities and the protection of historically and environmentally important areas and the provision of water access to these areas.

Unlike the state bill, this federal legislation calls for considerable support for the effort, \$20,000,000, to be provided to state and local governments for implementation of the plan after its approval by the Secretary of the Interior, and \$200,000 a year to support the work of the commission.

Current Legislative Proposals

- 50 The Boston Harbor Associates (TBHA), a private non-profit citizen group concerned with harbor issues, wrote and had submitted to the Massachusetts Legislature in 1979, Senate Bill 2006, which would create a special commission to prepare a development program for Boston Harbor. The commission's program is to deal with the extent and use of public lands, provision of public access to the waterfront, balancing local and regional issues in land use questions, protection of communities from disruption by development, review of the management roles of the various state and municipal agencies with jurisdiction over the harbor, and examination of the effectiveness of the Coastal Zone Management Program in improving the management of the harbor.

This legislation is similar to previous bills filed on behalf of Boston Harbor Associates over the last several years. If approved, the commission will have appointees of state and local governments and representatives of the legislature and the state agencies most directly concerned. The commission is projected to have a two year lifetime and will be funded by state and private sources and the federal Sea Grant Program through MIT. It is expected that the MIT program would provide some staffing, but the commission could have its own director and some staff.

While such an effort will provide a valuable resource to define and investigate some of the many problems faced by the harbor and the port, the proposed commission will be faced with the same problems of local versus



Boat Basin for Small
Motorcraft,
Fort Point Channel



Funding Strategies

Boston's successful waterfront development programs have used a variety of funding sources to help cover the high costs of acquiring, restoring, and developing land in Boston Harbor. In Charlestown, new park and open space areas have been created with the assistance of the Army Corps of Engineers, Metropolitan District Commission, Economic Development Administration, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (HCRS), while some of the costs of planning were funded by the Department of Defense and necessary transportation improvements will be paid for by the Department of Transportation's Urban System Program. These public funds are supplemented by local and state funding, and by private investment.

The number and variety of funding programs and the high level of federal government interest in the development of urban waterfronts are evidenced by the recent creation of an interagency Urban Waterfront Action Group. This group is made up of ten federal agencies and meets bi-weekly to assist local efforts requiring joint funding. It will also evaluate and propose modifications to existing federal programs impacting urban waterfront development. The ten agencies are: Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, Housing & Urban Development, Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Transportation, Economic Development Administration, Maritime Administration, Office of Coastal Zone Management, Federal Insurance Administration, and the National Park Service. The

National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National League of Cities, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors are also participating.

Within the Downtown/Fort Point Channel area, there exist many opportunities to utilize a variety of funding sources. Tentative agreement has already been reached with the state to fund Phase One of the Long Wharf Park using Heritage Conservation and Recreation funds and a portion of Boston's Community Development Revenue Sharing money. Cost of the first phase, which will include restoration of piling and deck area on the eastern tip of the pier, is \$1.7 million.

In addition, the City will be securing state and federal transportation money to cover costs of the proposed commuter and tourist boat terminals and any necessary improvements in access.

In other areas, the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) program can be used to cover site preparation and infrastructure improvement costs for areas where large amounts of private investment are expected in return for public funding of these necessary front end costs. A City policy recently announced by Mayor White will require these grants be repaid to the City over the life of the project to provide an ongoing pool of money to support development in Boston's neighborhoods.

The Urban Mass Transit Authority's (UMTA) Urban Initiatives Program provides assistance similar to UDAG in support of developments around transportation centers. The presence of a commuter boat terminal at Rowes Wharf may make that area eligible for assistance under this program which has already provided Boston over \$4 million.

In addition to the proposal for adding a Boston Harbor Historic Site to the existing National Park described elsewhere in this report, federal HCRS and State Heritage Park funds can be used for the proposed open space network linking major harborside attractions. These funds will be supplemented by support to be sought from local land and business owners as the park system will be expected to increase the activity level of the area and near-by business.

The Fort Point Channel boat basin could be aided by the use of historic preservation funds for renovation of the old Northern Avenue bridge (nominated for inclusion on the Federal Register of Historic Places) as its center. Coastal Energy Impacts loans may be available to reduce the cost of borrowing the money for the necessary infrastructure.

Finally, passage and funding of the Kennedy-Moakley bill will make Boston eligible for a portion of the \$20 million that legislation proposes to provide state and local governments to implement the plan for Boston Harbor.

52 Acknowledgements

The Boston Redevelopment Authority has initiated this planning study for Boston Harbor. It is only a first step in beginning to articulate the needs, goals, ideas for the harbor and in articulating the various public and private actors who must assume their respective responsibilities in continuing this effort and in achieving the recommendations set forth herein.

This has been a public planning process and one in which numerous groups and individuals with interests in the future of Boston Harbor have participated in a series of public workshops and informal discussions. We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of all who have participated by offering their ideas, criticisms, and insights. We trust that this mutually beneficial dialogue will continue.

Assisting the Boston Redevelopment Authority with this effort was Sasaki Associates, Inc. of Watertown, Massachusetts; Stuart O. Dawson, Principal/Project Director; Maurice Freedman, Principal; W. Gerald Venable, Project Manager; Nina Brown, Project Planner.

Assisting Sasaki Associates were: Shepard/Quraeshi, Inc., Architecture, Graphic Design, Trip Tech Models, Inc., and Gary Irish Graphics.

*An Early Morning
View of Boston Harbor
(Robin Foster, photographer
—Earthwatch)*



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Ordinance of 1641 of the General Court of Massachusetts
Bay Colony based upon Charters granted by King
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Boston Harbor

Challenges and Opportunities for the 1980's

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Kevin H. White, *Mayor*

Boston Redevelopment Authority
Robert J. Ryan, *Director*

Board of Directors
Robert L. Farrell, *Chairman*
Joseph J. Walsh, *Vice-Chairman*
James G. Colbert, *Treasurer*
James K. Flaherty, *Assistant Treasurer*
James E. Cofield, Jr., *Member*
Kane Simonian, *Secretary*

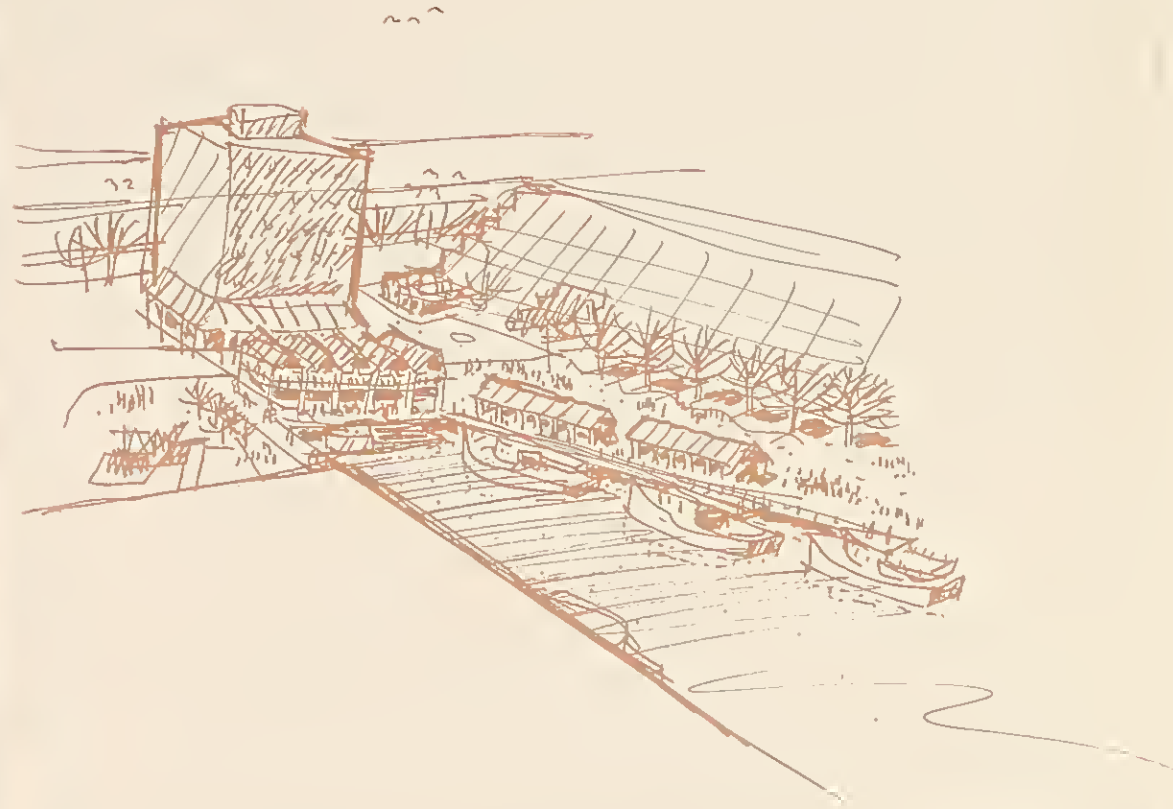
Sasaki Associates, Inc.
Watertown, Massachusetts

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Harbor Transportation

Development of two public terminal facilities is recommended: one between Long and Central Wharves adjacent to the Aquarium MBTA station; and one on Fosters Wharf as part of a multi-use complex of public terminal facilities, parking, bus loading and unloading, and restaurant.

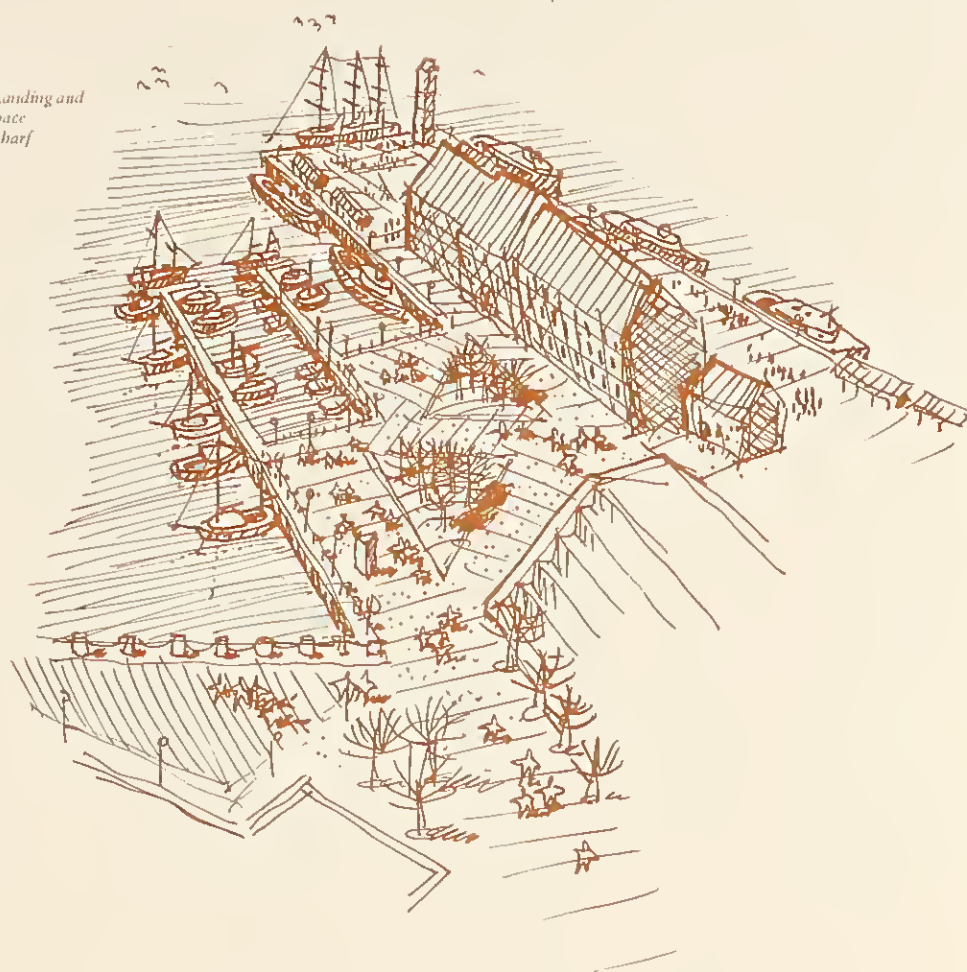
Terminal Facility
between Long and
Central Wharves



Public Landings

Locations for public landings for small craft are recommended adjacent to Long Wharf, at Northern Avenue, and along Fort Point Channel. The tip of Long Wharf is recommended as the major public landing, but largely for historic boats and ships.

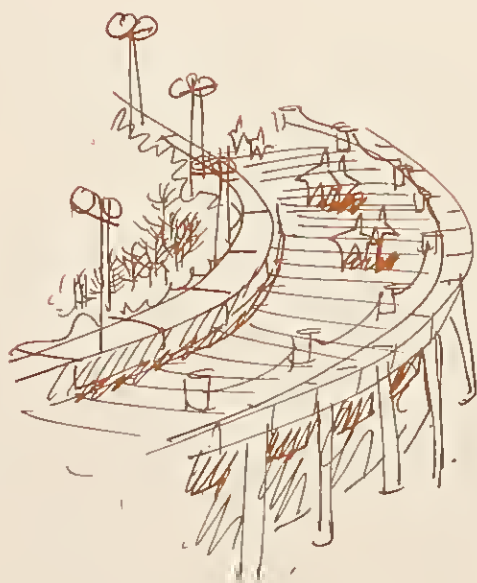
Public Landing and
Open Space
Long Wharf



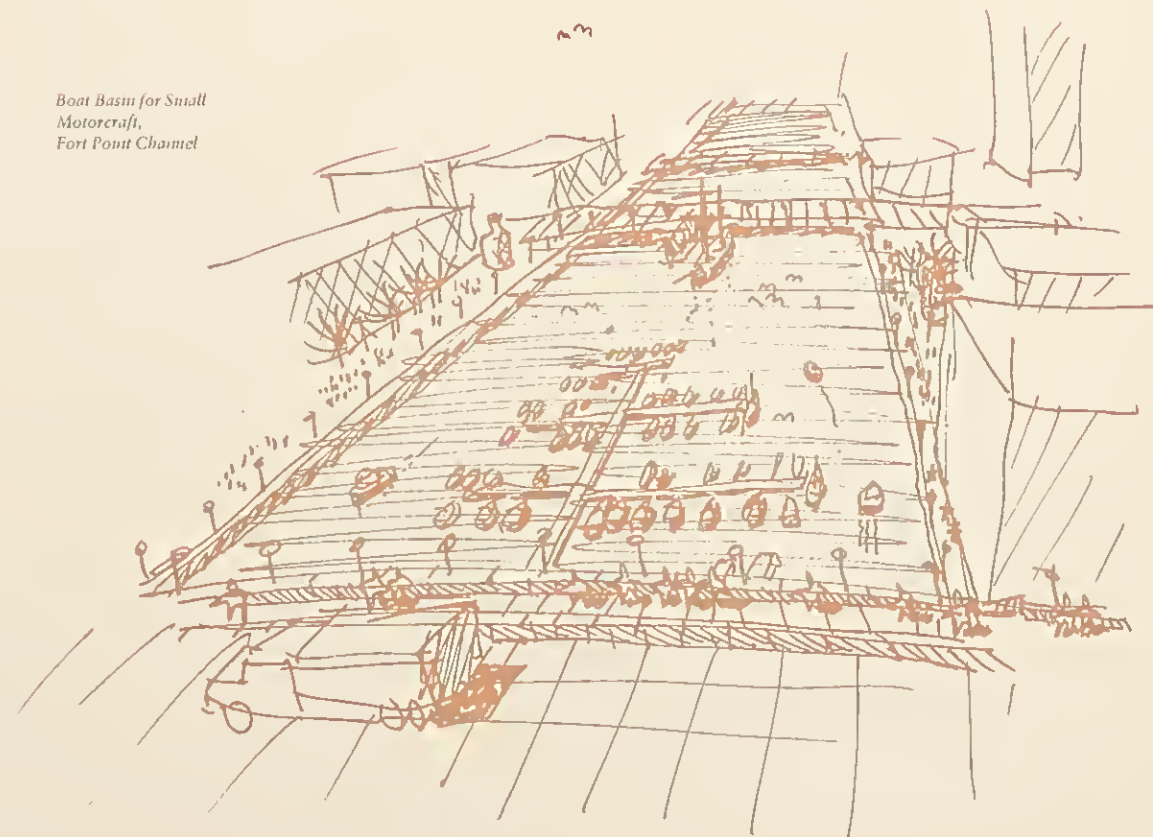
Northern Avenue
Vest-Pocket Park



Waterfront Pedestrian
Walkway



Boat Basin for Small
Motorcraft,
Fort Point Channel



Boat Basins

Major locations for new boat basins are recommended at the Northern Avenue Bridge and in Fort Point Channel.

Public Access

A system of public waterfront walkways is proposed along the water's edge from the downtown Waterfront Park to Northern Avenue and along either side of Fort Point Channel. These walkways would be developed by a combination of public entities, private interests, the latter through development controls placed upon new development parcels, or by acquisition of public easements through some existing privately owned parcels.

Public Open Space

Numerous additions to the downtown waterfront public open space system are proposed including the rehabilitation of the public open areas of Long Wharf, and small waterfront park areas at Rowes Wharf, Russia Wharf, Pier 1 and various locations along the Fort Point Channel.

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